MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST AMERICA PRESENTS:

SYNO V' HULMONO

ATLANTA

2025 FYC

RECONCILIATION & HEALING

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19

DIOCESAN FAMILY & YOUTH CONFERENCE;
16TH DIOCESAN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Clergy At Diocesan Assembly Meeting 2025

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

"ALL THIS IS FROM GOD, WHO THROUGH CHRIST RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF
MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST AMERICA
SYNO V HULMONO
RECONCILIATION
& HEALING
2 CORINTHIANS 5: 18-19
2025 FAMILY & YOUTH CONFERENCE
ATLANTA
AND GAVE US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; THAT IS, IN CHRIST GOD
WAS RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING THEIR TESPASSES
AGAINST THEM, AND ENTRUSTING TO US THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION."

DIOCESAN FAMILY & YOUTH CONFERENCE 2025;
16TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

ATLANTA

JULY 16 TO 19, 2025
HYATT REGENCY
265 PEACHTREE ST NE, ATLANTA, GA 30303

RECONCILIATION & HEALING

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18–19

"All this is God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."

HIS GRACE DR THOMAS MAR IVANIOS
DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

HIS GRACE ZACHARIAH MAR SEVERIOS
DIOCESE OF IDUKKI

REV. FR. TIMOTHY (TENNY) THOMAS

REV. FR. MATHEW (MAT) ALEXANDER

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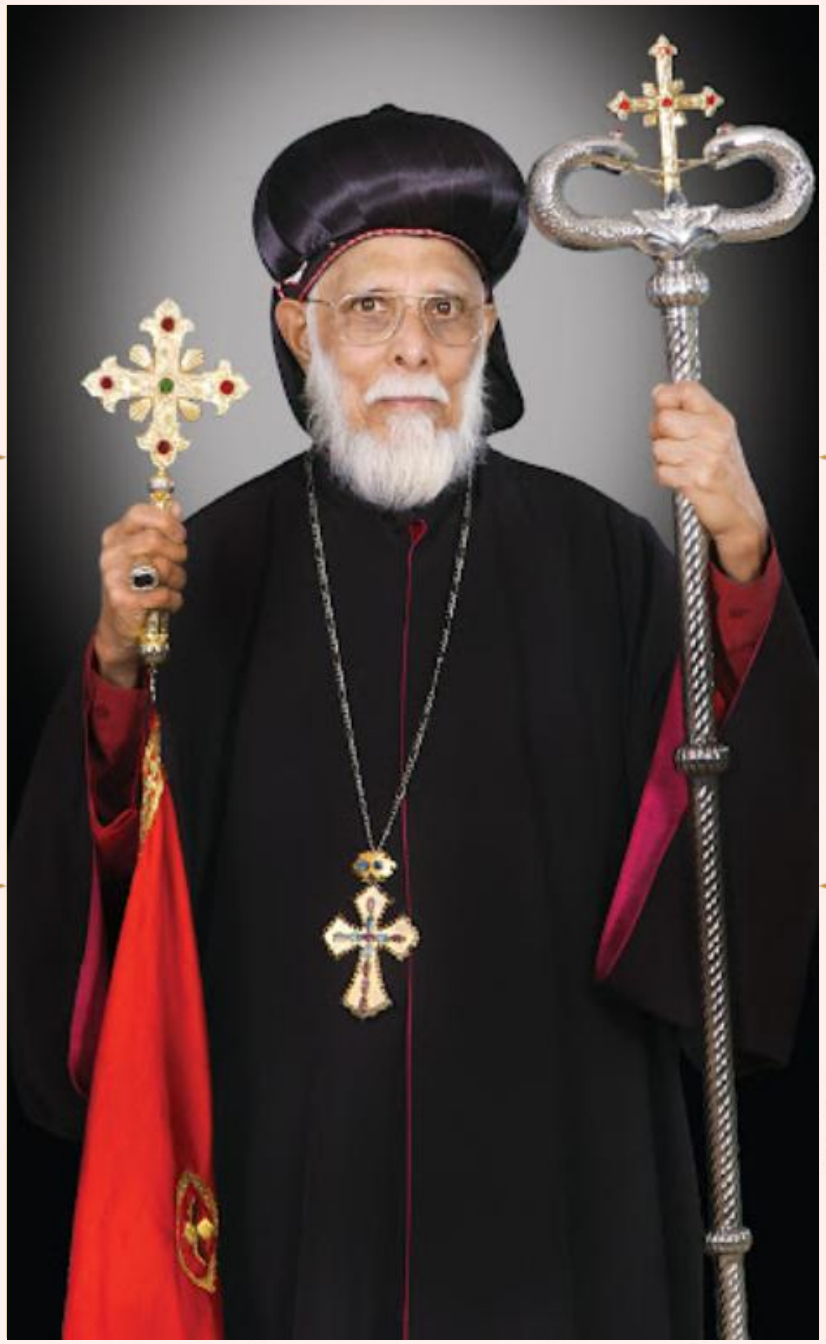
ΙC
ΧC

St. Mary, the Theotokos

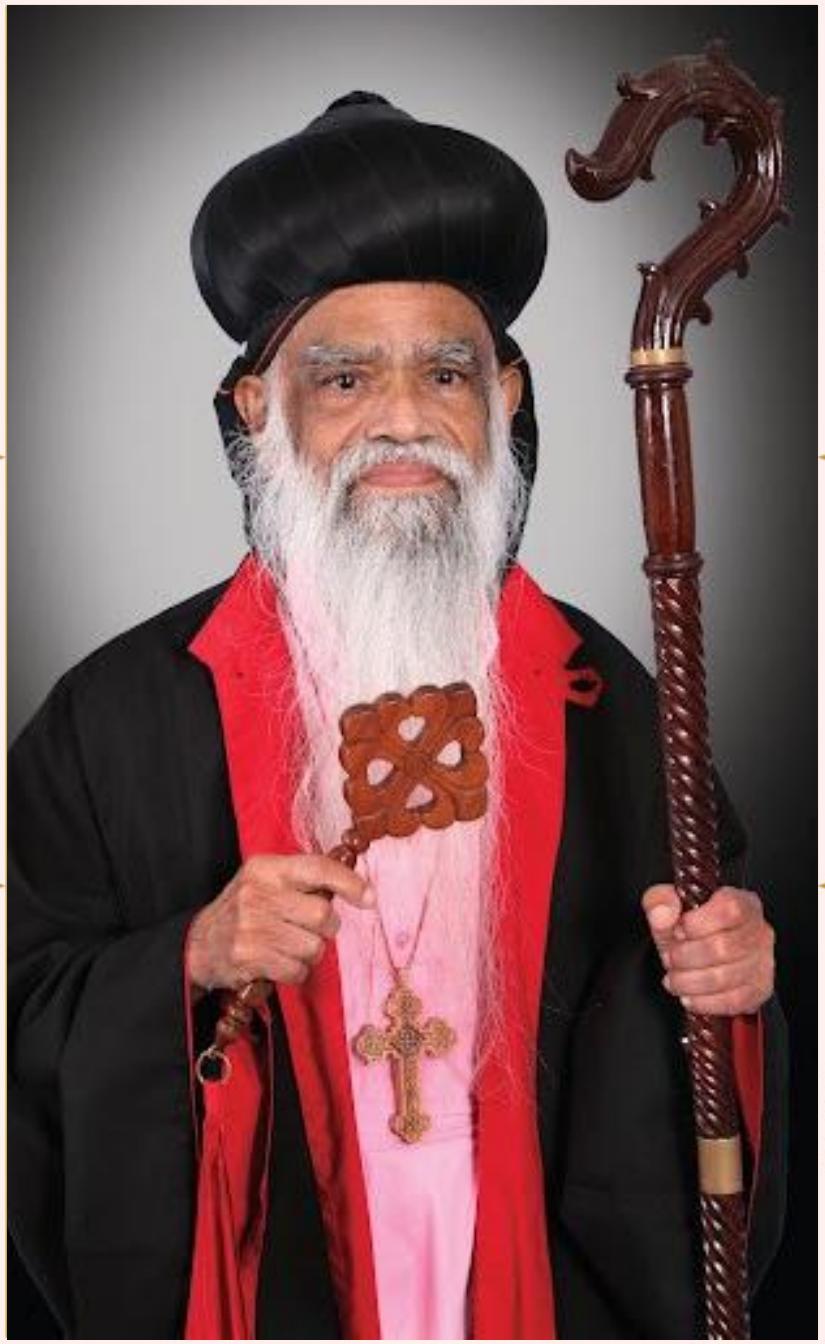
St. Thomas, the Apostle of India

St. Gregorios of Parumala

St. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius



H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios of Blessed Memory
First Metropolitan of America



H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas of Blessed Memory
Second Metropolitan of America

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LETTERS OF
FELICITATION

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CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

BASELIOS MARTHOMA MATHEWS III
CATHOLICOS OF
THE APOSTOLIC THRONE OF
ST. THOMAS
AND MALANKARA METROPOLITAN

CATHOLICATE PALACE
KOTTAYAM - 686 004
KERALA, INDIA

May 27, 2025

Blessings to you all in the name of the Triune God!

It gives us immense joy that you are gathering for yet another Family and Youth Conference of the South - West American Diocese coinciding with the 16th year Diocesan Day from July 16 -19, 2025 in Atlanta. We are sure, as always in the past, this conference will bring enormous occasions to reflect and refresh on our spiritual zone and to elevate and ascend to a level of spiritual joy.

As you gather, may the theme of the conference 'Reconciliation and Healing' guide your reflections and actions, drawing you closer to the divine. Reconciliation and healing are intertwined processes. Reconciliation involves restoring relationships and fostering a sense of unity. Healing, on the other hand, focuses on addressing emotional, psychological and spiritual wounds that can arise from conflict and disharmony. The Sacraments of the Church, most importantly, the Holy Qurbana are often a necessary precursor to meaningful reconciliation and healing.

It is heartening to witness such gatherings that nurture spiritual growth and community bonds. We commend the organizers for their dedication in bringing together such esteemed speakers, and leaders whose wisdom and insights will surely enrich your experience.

May this conference be an illuminant of inspiration, fostering unity, understanding and love among all participants from South - West American Diocese. As you engage in meaningful discussions and fellowship, may you feel the presence of God guiding you every step of the way. Our prayers and wishes for the Diocesan Souvenir which is published as part of the Conference and appreciates all those who work for it.

Our blessings and prayers for a fruitful and uplifting conference,

Baselios Marthoma Mathews III

H. G. Thomas Mar Ivanios

Metropolitan of the Diocese of South-West America

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No: 37/2025

Blessings to our beloved Vicars, Assistant Vicars, Priests of the locality, Cor-Episcopoi, Rambans, Deacons, Parish Managing Committee Members, and our faithful of the Diocese of South-West America!

Dearly Beloved,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we gather for the Family and Youth Conference 2025, held from July 16th to July 19th at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, I extend my warmest greetings. This sacred assembly, rooted in prayer, fellowship, and the Word of God, carries a divine purpose—healing hearts and reconciling lives through the grace of Christ.

This year's theme, "Reconciliation & Healing", based on 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, reminds us of the ministry entrusted to us by God—to be instruments of peace, restoration, and unity. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." May these words take root in every heart and bear fruit in every home and community.

To the families: May your bonds be deepened, your prayers be strengthened, and your journey together be renewed in the light of Christ's healing love. May your homes reflect the grace of God and be filled with forgiveness, compassion, and joy.

To the youth: May your spirits be stirred, your faith be ignited, and your calling be made clear. You are not the church of tomorrow—you are the church of today. May the ministry of reconciliation be lived out in your words, friendships, and dreams.

May these four days be filled with divine encounters, meaningful relationships, and a renewed commitment to Christ. And may each of you leave Atlanta transformed, restored, and ready to carry the message of reconciliation and healing into your homes, churches, and communities.

Urshlem Aramana, Beasley
May 26, 2025

Metropolitan Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios

The Honorable Brian Kemp

Governor of Georgia

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A COMMENDATION

WHEREAS: His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, The Catholicose of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, the supreme head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of the East (The Indian Orthodox Church) and the 92nd successor the throne of St. Thomas, the Apostle of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is sending His Holiness blessings for the 16th Year Anniversary Celebrations and 2025 Family and Youth Conference; and

WHEREAS: The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of the East is as old as Christianity and has existed in India for the past twenty plus centuries ever since St. Thomas the Apostle, founded the Church in A.D;52; and

WHEREAS: The Atlanta-area parishes are privileged by the arrival of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Synod Representatives His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of the Diocese of South-West America, who is also the Metropolitan of the Diocese of DSWA, and His Grace Zachariah Mar Severios Metropolitan of the Diocese of Idukki, Kerala, India, and will be holding a reception to honor the 16th Year of the Diocese of South-West America, following with the Diocesan Family and Youth Conference; and

WHEREAS: July 3rd is celebrated worldwide as St. Thomas Day. This year, the State of Georgia is proud to host the 2025 Family and Youth Conference alongside the 16th year Diocesan Day of the Diocese of South-West America on July 16-19 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Georgia; now

THEREFORE: I, BRIAN P. KEMP, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby commend the

2025 FAMILY AND YOUTH CONFERENCE and 16TH ANNIVERSARY DIOCESAN DAY

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 3rd day of July in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Twenty-Five.

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

CHIEF OF STAFF

FELICITATION LETTER
PRIEST TRUSTEE

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

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Phone: 0481 - 2578499, 2578500, Ph: +91 94962 31833, E-mail - priesttrustee@mosc.in

Fr. Dr. Thomas Varghese Amayil
Priest Trustee

To

May 24, 2025

The Diocese of South West America

Greetings in the name of the Holy Trinity to the respected Diocesan Members of the Diocese of South West America.

It brings me great joy to extend my heartfelt felicitations to conduct the Family and Youth Conference and 16th Year of Diocesan Day.

This conference offering an opportunity to strengthen family bonds and deepen the faithful's connection with the Church. It fosters learning, reflection, and engagement with Orthodox traditions, while also building cultural unity and intergenerational fellowship, ensuring the continuity of our faith. I also acknowledge with gratitude the leadership of His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios Metropolitan, whose guidance has been instrumental in shaping this diocese and strengthening its foundation. The dedication and enthusiasm of our clergy and laity here fill me with great hope for the future.

May this Conference and the Diocese Day will be vital in shaping St. Thomas tradition, identity and its mission. This beautiful occasion will strengthen relationships within families and with the Church, reinforcing our shared spiritual journey.

I deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of Diocesan members of the Church. May the Family and Youth Conference and 16th Year of Diocesan Day be a source of divine blessings, renewal, and joy. I offer my prayers and felicitation.

Special word of appreciation to the Souvenir committee.

May God bless and guide you all abundantly.

With prayers and best wishes,

Fr. Dr. Thomas Varghese Amayil

Priest Trustee

FELICITATION LETTER
LAY TRUSTEE

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Ronny Varghese Abraham
Lay Trustee

10th June 10, 2025

To the beloved members of the South West American Diocese,

I am delighted to extend my heartfelt greetings and prayers as you come together for the Family and Youth Conference and mark the 16th Anniversary of our Diocesan establishment. This is a moment of joy and thanksgiving, as you gather in fellowship to celebrate God's grace and reflect on your shared journey in faith.

Events like these offer a valuable opportunity to strengthen the bonds of love within families and renew our commitment to our Church and its mission. As Scripture reminds us:

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" – Psalm 133:1

Through prayer, learning, and worship, may this gathering deepen your understanding of the Orthodox faith and help nurture a spirit of unity across all generations. This occasion also remind us of our shared responsibility to pass on the legacy of faith to our children and youth.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." – Proverbs 22:6

I thank God for the leadership of all the lay people and of the clergy whose guidance has been a blessing to this Diocese. These are true signs of God's work among us.

May this Conference and Diocesan Day be a time of spiritual renewal, joyful fellowship, and lasting encouragement. I also express my sincere wishes to all who have worked behind the scenes, especially the team preparing the Souvenir.

May God continue to bless you, guide you, and strengthen you in all your endeavors for His glory.

With prayers and best wishes,

Ronny Varghese Abraham

Digitally signed by Ronny Varghese Abraham
Date: 2025.06.10 11:41:00 +05'30'

Ronny Varghese Abraham
Lay Trustee
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

FELICITATION LETTER
SABHA SECRETARY

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FELICITATION MESSAGE

Adv. Biju Oommen
Association Secretary
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Catholicate Aramana, Devalokam, Kottayam, Kerala, India

It is with great esteem and deep appreciation that I extend my felicitations to the Diocese of South-West America on the occasion of the 2025 Diocesan Family and Youth Conference, held in conjunction with the 16th Anniversary of the Diocese. The Diocese's sustained commitment to the spiritual, intellectual, and communal enrichment of its faithful stands as a testament to the dynamic leadership of H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios, the diocesan clergy, and its vibrant laity.

The Family and Youth Conference, with an anticipated participation of over 500 delegates representing diverse parishes across the United States, constitutes a significant ecclesiastical and sociocultural event within the diaspora community of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. In an era marked by increasing secularism, rapid technological advancement, and shifting cultural paradigms, such initiatives are indispensable for the reinforcement of spiritual identity and intergenerational ecclesial continuity.

Empirical studies consistently highlight the positive correlation between faith-based community engagement and psychosocial well-being among youth. The inclusion of multi-generational families in such conferences fosters not only theological education but also community resilience and inter-personal bonding. This becomes particularly relevant in diaspora contexts, where the preservation of cultural and liturgical heritage is both a challenge and a necessity.

Moreover, the Diocese's proactive role in community outreach—through food security programs, educational sponsorships, and targeted interventions for the underserved—aligns with the Church's historical mission of diakonia (service). The integration of faith and praxis evident in the Diocese's initiatives exemplifies a model of holistic ministry that is both contextually relevant and theologically rooted.

On behalf of the Catholicate and the central administrative apparatus of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, I congratulate the organizing committee, volunteers, and participants for their visionary planning and meticulous execution of this meaningful program. May this conference not only reaffirm our ecclesiastical identity but also inspire renewed commitment to the mission of the Church in the contemporary world.

With prayers and best wishes for the continued growth and witness of the Diocese of South-West America.
In faithful service,

Biju Oommen

Adv. Biju Oommen
Association Secretary
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
May 2025

EDITORIAL
LETTERS

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

4TH DIOCESAN FAMILY AND YOUTH CONFERENCE 2025
& 16TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

H.G Dr Thomas Mar Ivanios
Diocesan Metropolitan

Very Rev Raju Daniel
Corepiscopos
Chief Editor

Rev Fr George Daniel
[Benny Achen]
Conference Director

Rev Fr Koshy Mathew
[Biju Achen]
Conference Co-Director

Rev Fr Sanjeev Mary Offer
Conference Co-Director

Rev Fr Mathews George
[Sajeev Achen]
Conference Co-Director

Mr. Prasad John
General Convenor

Mr. Santhosh Varkey
Conference Treasurer

Mr. Binu Alex
Conference Secretary

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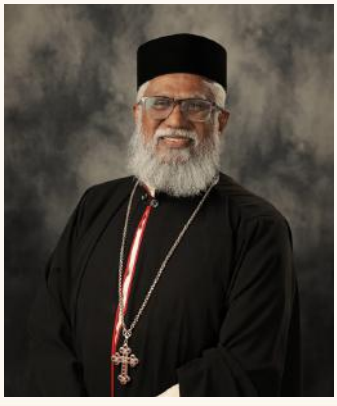

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one true God, Amen.

Glory and thanksgiving be to the Most Holy Trinity, whose abundant grace has guided every step of our preparations for the 2025 Family & Youth Conference of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in Atlanta, GA. By the mercy of God, this Souvenir now placed in your hands stands as both a keepsake and a witness: a record of the faith, fellowship, and sacrificial love that bind our Church family across continents and generations.

This Souvenir gathers:

- insightful reflections from hierarchs, scholars, and youth leaders
- letters of blessing from our shepherds
- snapshots of parish histories that testify to God's work in every corner of our Diocese
- generous sponsorships whose proceeds will strengthen the ministries of the Conference

I invite each reader to linger over these pages, to rejoice in the rich mosaic of our Orthodox witness, and to remember in prayer all who have offered their talents or resources. May what you read here kindle deeper love for the Holy Church, inspire renewed commitment to family life, and embolden our young people to shine "as lights in the world" (Phil 2:15).

This souvenir would not be possible without the prayers and support of many people. I offer heartfelt gratitude to His Holiness Moran Mor Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, whose paternal prayers and unfailing encouragement breathe life into every ministry of our Church, including this Conference and its Souvenir. May the Lord grant our Holy Father many years of peace and shepherdly wisdom.

With equal warmth I thank His Grace Dr Thomas Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of the Diocese of South-West America, whose vision and gentle leadership have charted the course for this gathering and for the present volume. Thirumeni's counsel has been a steady compass, reminding us that every page must ultimately point our youth and families toward Christ.

I also record with gratitude the tireless labors of Rev. Fr. Mathews George, Diocesan Secretary, along with the esteemed members of the Diocesan Council. Your administrative support, timely guidance, and cheerful availability made what once seemed daunting both orderly and joyful.

To Rev. Fr. George Daniel, Director of the Conference, and to our General Convener, Mr. Prasad John, I extend sincere appreciation. Your logistical mastery, pastoral hearts, and ability to unite countless volunteers created fertile ground in which this Souvenir could take root and flourish.

No words can adequately convey my admiration for the Souvenir Committee: clergy, laity, designers, proof-readers, and benefactors who labored—often late into the night—so that every article, photograph, and advertisement might be worthy of our Church and edifying to every reader. Your hidden

sacrifices shimmer on each page; may the Lord who “sees in secret” reward you openly.

Finally, I commend this humble offering to the protection of the Theotokos, St. Thomas the Apostle, and all the Saints who ceaselessly intercede for us. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with you always.

With love in Christ,
Very Rev Raju Daniel Cor-Episcopos
Chief Editor
On behalf of the Souvenir – 2025 Family & Youth Conference, Atlanta, Georgia

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

4TH DIOCESAN FAMILY AND YOUTH CONFERENCE 2025
& 16TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

H.G Dr Thomas Mar Ivanios
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General Convenor

Mr. Santhosh Varkey
Conference Treasurer

Mr. Binu Alex
Conference Secretary

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Atlanta, GA 30303

Dearly beloved in Christ,

By the Grace of God, we have gathered to participate in the Diocesan Family and Youth Conference. This year's theme of **"Reconciliation and Healing"** is needed for us to experience and practice in our daily lives. The purpose of the Church is to be the light to the world, a gathering of praise to the Almighty, and a place where we come to reconcile. The practice of reconciliation will heal our physical, spiritual and emotional ailments.

We are honored by the presence of renowned scholars to our conference. Our sincere thanks, and appreciation to H.G. Zacharias Mar Severios Metropolitan, Rev.Fr. Tenny Thomas, Mrs. Ceena Varghese and Rev. Fr. Matt Alexander for graciously accepting our invitation. I would like to acknowledge our Diocesan Metropolitan HG Thomas Mar Ivanios for his continuous encouragement and leadership.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. Prasad John who has worked tirelessly as the conference convener. Prasad has worked numerous hours and has traveled all throughout the country visiting numerous parishes. The entire conference committee has worked as a team to make this event a grand success. My gratitude to all members of the various committees.

I am obliged to Very Rev. Raju Daniel Cor-Episcopos for working as the Chief-editor of the Conference Souvenir. Special thanks to Mrs. Lini Sankarathil and Sheena Punnoose for leading the raffle committee.

Thanks to Divya John, who helped us with the artwork and designing of the logo, flyers and with the souvenir.

I am blessed and humbled to serve as the Director of the Family & Youth Conference. Once again, my sincere appreciation to those who worked endlessly for our diocesan conference.

Yours In Christ
Rev. Fr. George Daniel (Benny Achen)
Conference Director
On behalf of the DSWA Conference Committee 2025

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

4TH DIOCESAN FAMILY AND YOUTH CONFERENCE 2025 & 16TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

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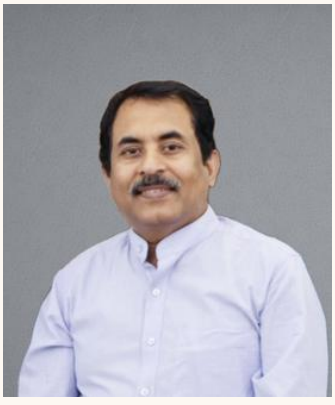


"My Lord and My God" – Greetings to each one of you!

WELCOME to the '**The Diocesan Family & Youth Conference – 2025**', "**SYNO V HULMONO**".

After our diocese was born in 2009, the first Diocesan FYC (Family and Youth Conference), started in 2012, which was held in Miami, Florida: the second one was held in Dallas, Texas in 2015; the third one was held in Chicago, Illinois in 2019; and here we are in Atlanta, Georgia in 2015. Welcome to Atlanta!

As we enter into the fourth diocesan family and youth conference under the able and spiritual guidance of our Diocesan Metropolitan H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios, along with the prayerful support from the Diocesan Council, Secretary, Clergy, Assembly and Association Members along with the faithful on July 16-19, 2025 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, we sincerely hope and pray that this conference opened up our hearts to Reconcile with one another, so that our hearts and soul can be healed in the process.

As The Holy Bible extensively speaks on Reconciliation and Healing, highlighting our relationship with God and among each one of us, let us utilize this period for forgiveness, repentance, and to reinstate our broken bonds. As the theme of the FYC2025 states and calls our attention to the scriptures 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, we highlight God's initiative in reconciliation through Christ that is calling upon us to partake in this process, both with God and our fellow beings. During this conference, we had plenty of time to confess and to partake in the Holy Qurbana, which many of us would have utilized.

This conference combining the entire family, is a coming together of families across the Diocese as one union/family, and has become an integral part that celebrates the dynamic ministry of our Diocese for several years. It is a place where our Clergy and Faithful from across the Diocese gather together in unity, prayer, fellowship and reflection.

This is a ministry which serves as a platform for further growth in our Diocese, where all spiritual ministries have been able to collaborate with each other to enlighten our faithful. We submit and pray that this gathering be a blessing for our Diocese to spiritually grow and foster a greater relationship amongst our clergy and faithful.

We were blessed with the presence of our eminent & distinguished guests and speakers H.G. Zacharias Mar Severios, Rev.Fr. Timothy (Tenny) Thomas, Mrs. Mariam Ceena Mathew and Rev. Fr. Mathew (Matt) Alexander, thanks - for graciously accepting our invitation and leading the conference.

May The Almighty God's mercies and blessing be upon all those who were/are working silently behind this conference, being instrumental to make it a blessing. Especially the various committees including Registration, Welcome, Transportation, Food, Design, Curriculum, Choir, AV, etc. Our fund-raising committees also need a special recognition: Souvenir and

Raffle. To all our sponsors and donors, whom we cannot thank you enough, your generous contributions have helped us significantly. Nevertheless, we cannot thank our MGOCSM enough, who were instrumental in many of the back-end work. No words are enough to thank the St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church, Atlanta members for their commitment.

We sincerely hope that you have reached back home safely, where you can continue to enrich what you have received during this FYC, to spread the healing touch in your respective parishes and communities, and reconcile with one another.

Thanking the Lord God Almighty for all the wonderful things HE has done for our Diocese as a whole; sincere thanks for trusting in me to anchor the ship; and an abundance of love and gratitude for my family in helping out during these months.

Yours In Christ
Prasad John
Conference Convenor
On behalf of the DSWA Conference Committee 2025

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

RECONCILIATION & HEALING

Reconciliation & Healing: The Divine Work of Restoration in Jesus Christ

HIS GRACE THOMAS MAR IVANIOS

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them..."
(2 Corinthians 5:18 -19)

My Dear Beloved in Christ! It is a joyous time as we come together to celebrate our diocese's Family and Youth Conference, based on St. Paul's theme, Reconciliation and Healing.

The message of reconciliation is at the heart of the Christian Gospel. According to St. Paul, it is not humanity who first seeks God, but God who initiates reconciliation with His creation. In this divine initiative lies the mystery of salvation: God calls humanity back to Himself, not merely by pardoning sins, but by healing the very condition of alienation and restoring us to our original dignity. In the Orthodox tradition, particularly rooted in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church, this reconciliation unfolds not only as forgiveness but as a return to holiness, a path of divine transformation, and a final experience of healing in communion with God.

1. Reconciliation: A Return to Holiness

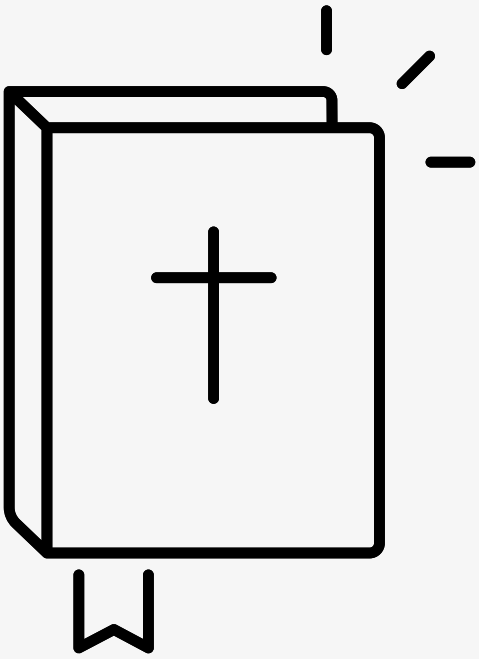
Reconciliation, as taught by the Church and revealed through Scripture, is always a movement from humanity to God, not merely a treaty between individuals. It is a spiritual homecoming. Sin is not just moral failure—it is exile, a rupture in the relationship with the Holy One. Therefore, reconciliation is not a superficial patchwork of peace, but a return to holiness itself. In the Greek of the New Testament, the word reconciliation implies restoration, a realignment with God's original intent.

To be reconciled is to return to the divine likeness we were created in. It means shedding the layers of self-centeredness, hatred, impurity, and fear, and embracing again the image of God imprinted on our souls. The Holy Church calls us to this life constantly: through fasting, prayer, confession, and sacraments. The altar becomes the place where sinners return to the Father, and the Holy Qurbana the feast that seals this reconciliation with the Body and Blood of Christ.

2. Embracing the Path of Holiness: The Church as "The Way"

Reconciliation is not only a moment, but a journey. In the early Church, Christianity was called The Way (Acts 9:2)—not simply a belief system, but a manner of life. The Orthodox Fathers speak of the spiritual life as a gradual ascent, a pilgrimage toward divine likeness, where we move from one degree of holiness to another. Reconciliation is the door; the path is holiness.

"To be reconciled is to return to the divine likeness we were created in."



In families and among the youth, true reconciliation is not merely an emotional resolution, but the invocation of Christ into the shared space of life. When Christ is present—through prayer, through the reading of Scripture, through sacramental grace—the atmosphere of the home is changed. The presence of Christ sanctifies not only the soul but the mind, the emotions, and even the relationships between people. In that holy environment, peace becomes real, and wounds are gently healed.

The path of holiness involves struggle. It involves saying no to sin and yes to virtue. But more than that, it is a life lived in the constant presence of God. In the Church, this is made possible through the ascetic life, daily repentance, and most especially, the Holy Mysteries.

3. Healing: Reaching the Harbor of Divine Communion

The third and final movement of reconciliation is healing, what the

"The path of holiness involves struggle. It involves saying no to sin and yes to virtue. But more than that, it is a life lived in the constant presence of God."

Fathers often called theosis or union with God. This is when God comes and dwells in the reconciled human being, making the person a holy temple. As St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?*" This indwelling is healing in the truest sense—not just of the body, but of the soul, the mind, and the heart.

In this stage, reconciliation finds its completion. The Church often describes healing in maritime terms—reaching the harbor. After the stormy sea of life, after the path of holiness is walked in repentance and obedience, the soul finds rest in the experience of divine communion. This experience is nothing less than salvation itself: to know God, to feel His peace, to be fully restored to the image of His Son.

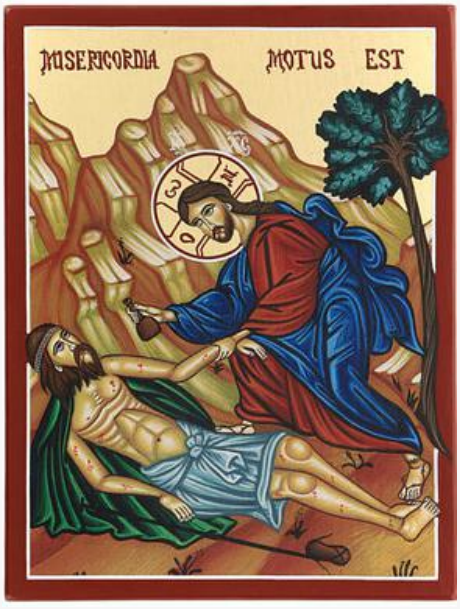
The Holy Qurbana (Divine Liturgy) plays a central role in this healing. The Fathers call it the medicine of immortality, echoing St. Ignatius of Antioch. It is not only a memorial meal, but the real participation in the divine life of Christ, who enters into the believer, sanctifies the body and soul, and offers healing beyond the reach of human medicine. Baptism initiates us into this life, but it is the Qurbana that continually nourishes, restores, and sanctifies us.

Conclusion: Living the Ministry of Reconciliation

In 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, we are reminded that reconciliation is not only something we receive from God—it is also a ministry we are called to carry out. Just as Christ reconciled the world to the Father, the Church and her faithful are now entrusted with the sacred task of being instruments of healing in the world. Through the sacraments, through prayer, and most importantly, through lives that bear witness to holiness, we become signs of God's reconciling love.

'...the Church and her faithful are now entrusted with the sacred task of being instruments of healing in the world."

Today, in families, among youth, and across the divisions of our world, reconciliation must begin by invoking Christ, returning to holiness, walking the path of transformation, and leading one another to the healing presence of God. This is the vocation of the Church, and this is the gift we have received—to be reconciled and to bring reconciliation to others.

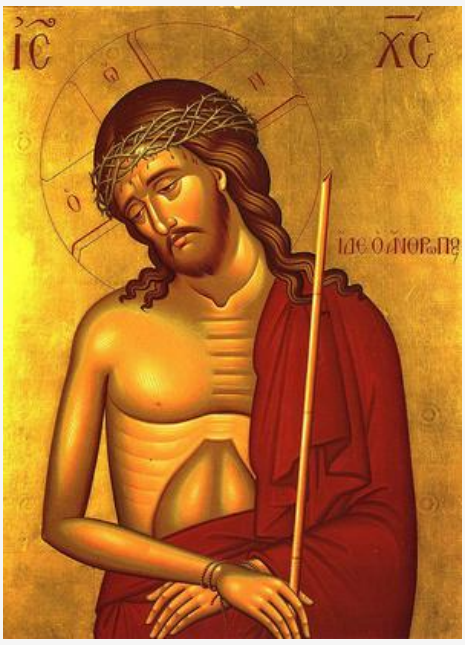


A Call to Restore The Image of God

HIS GRACE ZACHARIAH MAR SEVERIOS

The Orthodox Church, as the living body of Christ has always proclaimed the message of reconciliation and healing. From the time of the fall, humanity has been estranged from God, wounded by sin and separated from the fullness of life. Yet, in His boundless mercy, God, sent His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to restore us to communion with Him. Through His incarnation, crucifixion, and glorious resurrection, Christ not only reconciled us to the Father but also entrusted us with the sacred ministry of reconciliation.

Just as Christ healed the sick and restored the outcasts, we are called to bring healing to those around us—not



"Healing is not just the absence of suffering but the restoration of the divine image in us."

not only physically but spiritually and emotionally. This healing requires patience, humility, and a deep reliance on God's strength.

Healing is not just the absence of suffering but the restoration of the divine image in us. As St. Gregory of Nyssa teaches, true healing occurs when we ascend toward God, leaving behind the corruption of sin and embracing His divine love. In our families, parishes, and communities, we are called to embody this reconciliation by forgiving one another, bearing each other's burdens, and striving for unity.

The Holy Fathers remind us that division is the work of the evil one, but are called to embody this reconciliation by forgiving one another, bearing each other's burdens, and striving for unity. The Holy Fathers remind us that division is the work of the evil one, but unity in Christ brings true peace.

At this Diocesan Family and Youth Conference, let us reflect on our own spiritual journey. Are we reconciled with God? Are we healers in our homes, our churches, and our communities? Let us embrace the Orthodox path of repentance, humility, and sacramental life so that we may truly experience the reconciliation and healing that Christ offers.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen us in this ministry, and may the intercessions of the Theotokos and all the saints guide us toward the fullness of God's love.

+ In Christ's Mercy
Zachariah Mar Severios Metropolitan

The Holy *Qurbono*: The Ultimate Expression of Healing & Reconciliation

REV. FR. TIMOTHY THOMAS, PHD

The Divine Liturgy or the Holy *Qurbono* stands at the heart of Orthodox Christian life, not merely as a ritual of worship but as the very medicine of the soul and a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. In it, Christ Himself, the Great High Priest, extends His divine healing to broken humanity, drawing all into the life-giving communion of the Holy Trinity. As St. John Chrysostom declares, "*The Church is a hospital*," [1] and nowhere is this more profoundly experienced than in the Eucharistic gathering, where Christ's redeeming work is made present, reconciling God and man, heaven and earth, time and eternity.

Healing Through the Eucharist

From the dawn of creation, humanity was made for communion with God, yet the Fall ruptured this sacred bond. Sin introduced alienation—between man and God, within man himself, and among men. However, Christ, the Second Adam, came to restore what was lost, offering Himself as the antidote to corruption. In the Divine Liturgy, we encounter the very Body and Blood of Christ, the true *samm hayye* (medicine of immortality), [2] which heals the wounds of sin and death.

"...Christ...came to restore what we lost, offering himself as the antidote of corruption."

The words of the Anaphora in the Liturgy encapsulate this reality: "He gave Himself up for the life of the world, ...that He might descend into the Hades and break the bonds of death... This is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins. This is My Blood... which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins." [3]

This sacred mystery is not mere symbol or remembrance; it is participation in the very life of Christ. As St. Ignatius of Antioch affirms, the Eucharist is "*the medicine of immortality, the antidote to prevent us from dying, but which causes that we should live forever in Jesus Christ.*" [4] Every communicant partakes of divine life, experiencing the healing power of the Incarnate Lord, whose wounds become the source of our restoration (Isaiah 53:5).

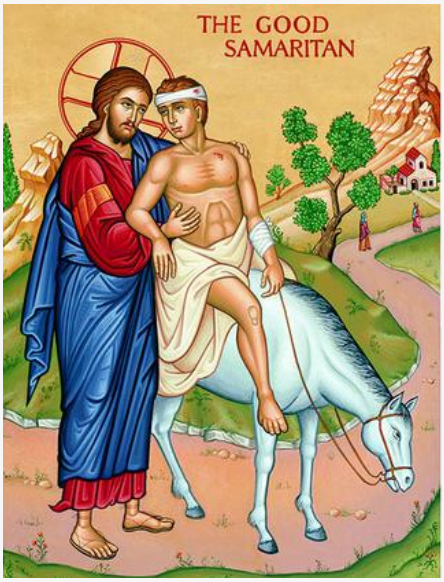
Reconciliation Through the *Qurbono*

The Divine Liturgy is also the supreme act of reconciliation—between humanity and God, and among members of the Body of Christ. The preparatory prayers of the faithful before Communion make clear that participation in the Eucharist demands reconciliation: "*Let us forgive all things for the Resurrection's sake, and so let us cry aloud: Christ is risen from the dead!*" [5]

Reconciliation is woven into the very structure of the Liturgy. The Kiss of Peace, an ancient practice restored in many Orthodox parishes, is not merely a greeting but a declaration that those who approach the Chalice do so in unity. Christ Himself commands this reconciliation before worship: "*If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift*

there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

Thus, the Liturgy is not an individualistic experience but the corporate return of fallen humanity to the embrace of the Father. It is a cosmic act in which heaven and earth unite, as the angelic host joins the faithful in hymning the Trisagion: "*Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.*" [6]



The Great Physician and the Church as a Hospital

The Church Fathers often likened the Church to a hospital, where Christ, the Great Physician, ministers to the sick. St. John Chrysostom, in his homilies, urges the faithful to approach the Eucharist as those seeking healing: "*Do you not see the physician touching the diseased with his hand? God has given us a remedy greater than nature, for He has bestowed upon us His own Body.*" [7]

The prayers of the Divine Liturgy continually implore God for healing—both physical and spiritual. The Liturgy of St. Basil includes petitions for the sick, the suffering, and all those in need of divine mercy. This reflects the holistic vision of salvation in Orthodox theology: God's healing extends not only to the soul but to the whole person, body and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

A Foretaste of the Kingdom

Ultimately, the Divine Liturgy or the Holy *Qurbono* is the foretaste of the eschaton, where full healing and reconciliation are consummated. St. Ephrem emphasizes that every Holy *Qurbono* is experienced as a joining of the earthly and heavenly liturgies. The Church stands mystically at the threshold of the eschaton—the end times—not as a future hope alone, but a present, lived reality in the Eucharist. In this sacred moment, the Church stands outside time, experiencing a reality in which there is no sickness, no division, no death—only communion with God. [8]

Qurbono as a mystical participation in the Kingdom of God, is not just a symbol, but a real anticipation of the heavenly banquet. In his Hymns on the Eucharist and Hymns on Paradise, Ephrem speaks of the Eucharist as both healing and communion with the divine life. [9]

"Ultimately, the Divine Liturgy or the Holy Qurbono is the foretaste of the eschaton, where full healing and reconciliation are consummated."

Conclusion

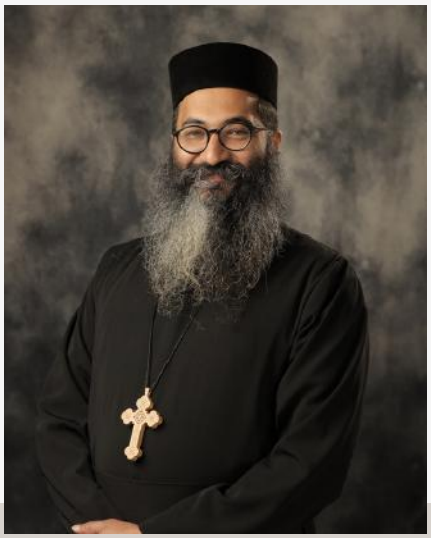
The Divine Liturgy is not merely a service but an encounter with the living Christ, the ultimate expression of healing and reconciliation. In the Eucharist, humanity's deepest wounds are touched by divine grace, and the chasm between Creator and creation is bridged. The Liturgy calls all to repentance, unity, and the love of God, offering a foretaste of that eternal banquet where every tear will be wiped away (Revelation 21:4). As we stand before the Holy Table in every Holy *Qurbono*, let us recognize that in this sacred mystery, we are made whole, transformed by the One who is Himself our Peace (Ephesians 2:14).

In the Holy Qurbono, the Church – we – do not stand as spectators but as participants in the healing of the world. The Holy Qurbono is not only the culmination of liturgical worship—it is the womb of the new creation. In it, sin is forgiven, hearts are reconciled, and the broken are made whole. The pain of humanity meets the mercy of God, and what is earthly becomes divine. Let us approach this Mystery with tears and awe, with repentance and hope, knowing that each time we receive the Body and Blood, we are being re-formed in the image of the One who gave Himself for us. At the altar – our healing begins, so does eternity.

References:
[1] St. John Chrysostom, Homily 30 on Romans and Homily 25 on Saint Matthew
[2] Aho Shemunkasho, Healing in the Theology of Saint Ephrem, (Gorgias press, 2002), 22
[3] The Anaphorae of St. James, St. Basil, and St. John Chrysostom
[4] St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians 20:2
[5] Doxastikon of the Praises, Hymn Sung Suring Resurrection Matins
[6] Youssef, Youhanna. In Chapter VI: Notes on the Traditions Concerning the Trisagion, within The Life and Works of Severus of Antioch in the Coptic and Copto-Arabic Tradition: Texts and Commentaries (Gorgias Press, 2014) and the Holy Qurbono text of the Malankara Orthodox Tradition
[7] St. John Chrysostom, Homily on Ephesians 1:3
[8] Sebastian Brock, St. Ephrem's Hymns on Paradise 11, (SVS Press, 1997)
[9] Sebastian Brock, St. Ephrem Hymns on the Eucharist, The Harp 1 (1987), 61-68

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Reconciliation & Healing



REV. FR. MATHEW ALEXANDER

Have you ever been at a dinner where two people at the table were having a fight? Sometimes it's children fighting, sometimes it's adults, sometimes a mix of the two, but regardless it usually goes one of two ways. Either they are arguing out loud and the rest of the people at the table are looking at each other trying to escape... or there is just an awkward silence at the table. The tension in the room somehow defies the laws of physics and makes the sound of the fork hitting the plate seem louder, and time slow down. Even casual words like, "please pass the water" seem out of place and forbidden. Either way, the whole dinner is just uncomfortable. We have this feeling in the pit of our stomach that things are not as they should be.

The same goes for God's dining table. God invites us to a meal at His house, and we have the amazing privilege of that connection with God at the table. The only problem is that we can't simultaneously talk with God and also fight with someone else at the table. In fact, fights mess up the entire dinner for everyone. In those moments, we wish for a day when everyone can just sit down for a nice peaceful, loving, lively dinner. Notice in the Gospel of St. Matthew the connection between communion and reconciliation.

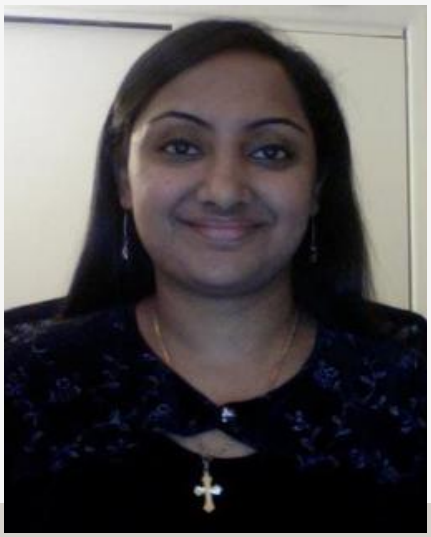
"The only problem is that we can't simultaneously talk with God and also fight with someone else at the table."

18 "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you
bind on earth will be bound in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth will be
loosed in heaven.
19 "Again I say to you that if two of you
agree on earth concerning anything that
they ask, it will be done for them by My
Father in heaven. 20 For where two or
three are gathered together in My name,
I am there in the midst of them."
21 Then Peter came to Him and said,
"Lord, how often shall my brother sin
against me, and I forgive him? Up to
seven times?"
22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you,
up to seven times, but up to seventy
times seven.

-St. Matthew 18:18-22

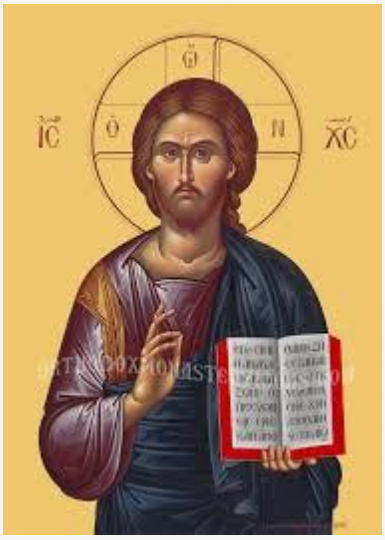
Why not just dinner for two, me and God? Why do I have to go to church to experience God? Because, God has not designed any of us to live alone, completely separate from other people. He even says in Genesis 2:18 that "It is not good that man should be alone." And when in that community, through humility, we agree and are in harmony with one another, just as the Trinity exists in harmony, we enter into communion with God. In that communion, Jesus promises that anything that we ask, "it will be done." Peter immediately notices the difficulty in what Jesus has said, and asks how long he should keep forgiving a brother at the table? Jesus gives him the answer, which by the way is not 490. He's not testing Peter's math skills. God's forgiven us many more times than that.

Peace Through Reconciliation & Healing



MARIAM CEENA MATHEW

The theme for this year's conference, "Reconciliation and Healing" based on 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, is the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ came to grant reconciliation and healing to our broken and sinful world.



Reconciliation is a powerful theme in the Bible, reflecting God's desire to heal and restore the perfect harmony between God and man and between men. Through sin, man alienated himself from God, causing discord and destroying peace. But through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, we have been restored to our original perfect relationship with God. As St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, we have been reconciled with God through Christ and granted forgiveness of our sins.

So what does reconciliation bring? Reconciliation and healing brings peace. When we fell away from God, we took on this sickness called sin, which destroys peace. Just as physical sickness takes away peace, our spiritual sickness also destroys peace because it alienates us from God. But through Jesus Christ the Good Physician, we are healed of this spiritual sickness. What Jesus did on the cross brought us healing and thus restored peace to the world!

Reconciliation is about experiencing peace. It is about enjoying the beauty of our relationship with God. It is about experiencing the forgiveness of our sins and working towards our perfection in Christ. Sin caused distance from God but Christ restored peace. As Ephesians 2:14 states, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

Reconciliation is about experiencing peace with God but it also about experiencing peace with others. Once we experience this inner peace, we are called to spread it to the people around us. God has sent us into this world with a purpose. As St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." We are called to represent Christ and bring about His kingdom on earth. As Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (St. Mathew 5:9). For this, first and foremost we must forgive others just the way God forgave us. God's ultimate act of reconciliation through Christ calls us to the vital task of reconciling others to Him, and with each other. It is through preaching the Gospel through our lives – loving and helping others as Christ did – that we can bring the peace of Christ to this world as the ambassadors of Christ.

"...through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, we have been restored to our original perfect relationship with God."

As we meditate on the topic of reconciliation and healing, let us remember that it is about experiencing peace in our relationship with God and with others. Let us experience that inner peace that Christ brings us and also spread that peace to others by rightly representing the love of Christ to others.

THE DIOCESE OF
SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

DIOCESAN HISTORY

The history of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in North America traces its roots to the mid-20th century, marking the beginning of a significant spiritual journey. In 1954, a pivotal moment occurred when H.G. Daniel Mar Philoxenos participated in the WCC General Assembly in Evanston, Illinois, establishing one of the first official connections between the Church and North America. The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 proved transformative, opening doors for numerous professionally qualified individuals from India to migrate to the United States. This legislation catalyzed the growth of the Malankara Orthodox Christian community in America, as many faithful sought better opportunities while maintaining their spiritual heritage.

The 1970s witnessed the gradual establishment of Malankara Orthodox parishes in major U.S. cities, though these early years were marked by uncertainty about the Church's future in America. Despite these challenges, pioneer priests worked tirelessly to establish and nurture parishes serving the growing immigrant community. A significant milestone was reached in 1976 when the Holy Synod decided to establish more dioceses for better administration of the global faithful. Initially, the American churches were placed under the Bombay Diocese, with H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios as Metropolitan. This arrangement evolved further when, on July 14, 1979, at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in Manhattan, Mar Makarios was enthroned as Metropolitan of the newly independent American Diocese, under the authority of Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews I.

The 1980s and early 1990s marked a period of substantial growth under Mar Makarios's leadership, with the number of parishes expanding to nearly fifty. The dedicated service of priests during this era contributed significantly to the unity and prosperity of the Diocese. A transition period began in 1991 when the Diocese came under the direct control of the Malankara Metropolitan, with H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas assisting in administration. This arrangement continued for one year until Mar Barnabas was appointed as Metropolitan of the Diocese, with his enthronement ceremony held on March 27, 1993, at St. Mary's Malankara Orthodox Church in West Sayville, New York.

Under Mar Barnabas's leadership, the Diocese experienced both spiritual and physical growth, with particular emphasis on developing spiritual organizations. His most notable contribution was the establishment of national structures for MGOCSM and Sunday School, creating a foundation for youth education and engagement that continues to influence the Church today. The year 2009 marked another significant transformation when the American Diocese was divided into two separate entities: the Northeast American

DIOCESAN HISTORY

Diocese, based in New York under Mar Barnabas and assisted by H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos, and the Diocese of South-West America, headquartered in Houston under the leadership of H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebius.

The early years of the South-West Diocese (2010-2017) began with the enthronement of Mar Eusebius as Diocesan Metropolitan on May 22, 2010, at St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Cathedral in Houston. Under his leadership, the diocese expanded to encompass 55 parishes and 7 congregations across the southern and western United States and western Canada. This period saw the establishment of numerous ministries focused on spiritual growth and charitable activities. A significant development during this era was the creation of "Urshlem," the Diocesan Center, inaugurated on November 30, 2012, on 100 acres in Beasley, Texas. This center was envisioned as the administrative and spiritual hub for the growing diocese.

The diocese implemented several key initiatives during this period, including the formalization of Sunday School education with a standardized curriculum and teacher certification program. The Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement (MGOCSM) and Morth Mariam Vanitha Samajam (MMVS) became increasingly active, providing spiritual formation for students and women respectively. The Orthodox Christian Youth Movement (OCYM) and Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in the United States (FOCUS) were strengthened to address the needs of young adults and professionals, while the establishment of counseling services and prayer fellowships provided additional support to the faithful. The Family and Youth Conferences were also initiated on a diocesan level, taking place first in Miami, Florida in 2012 followed by Dallas, Texas in 2015.

In 2017, the diocese came under the direct administration of the Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos, H.H. Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose Il, assisted by H.G. Dr. Zacharias Mar Aprem. The Diocesan Metropolitan, His Holiness, both in the capacity of the Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan and the Diocesan Metropolitan, made pastoral visits every year. His Grace Dr. Zacharias Mar Aprem, Assistant Metropolitan, made pastoral visits to several parishes within the diocese while also being active in the administrative and spiritual matters of the Diocese. The tenth anniversary of the Diocese along with the Diocesan Family and Youth Conference was conducted at Chicago in 2019.

The transformation period of 2020-2023 brought significant changes to the diocese's leadership and structure. Following the repose of H.H. Baselios Marthoma Paulose II in

DIOCESAN HISTORY

2020, H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III was enthroned as the new Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan. In 2022, H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios was appointed as the new Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan. In 2022, H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios was appointed as the new Diocesan Metropolitan, ushering in a new era of growth and development. The Diocesan Assembly of 2023 proved transformative with decisions to establish a monastery, implement comprehensive parish documentation reviews, approve the construction of a chapel at the diocesan center, etc.

This period also witnessed numerous church consecrations, including St. Paul's Malankara Orthodox Church in Dallas and St. Gregorios Orthodox Church in Atlanta, both blessed by His Holiness during his apostolic visit in October 2023. The year saw significant expansion with new congregations established across multiple regions, particularly in the Northwest Region of Canada and the Southeast United States. The diocese also strengthened its educational initiatives through the establishment of the Mar Makarios Scholarship program and enhanced its administrative capabilities through various technological improvements.

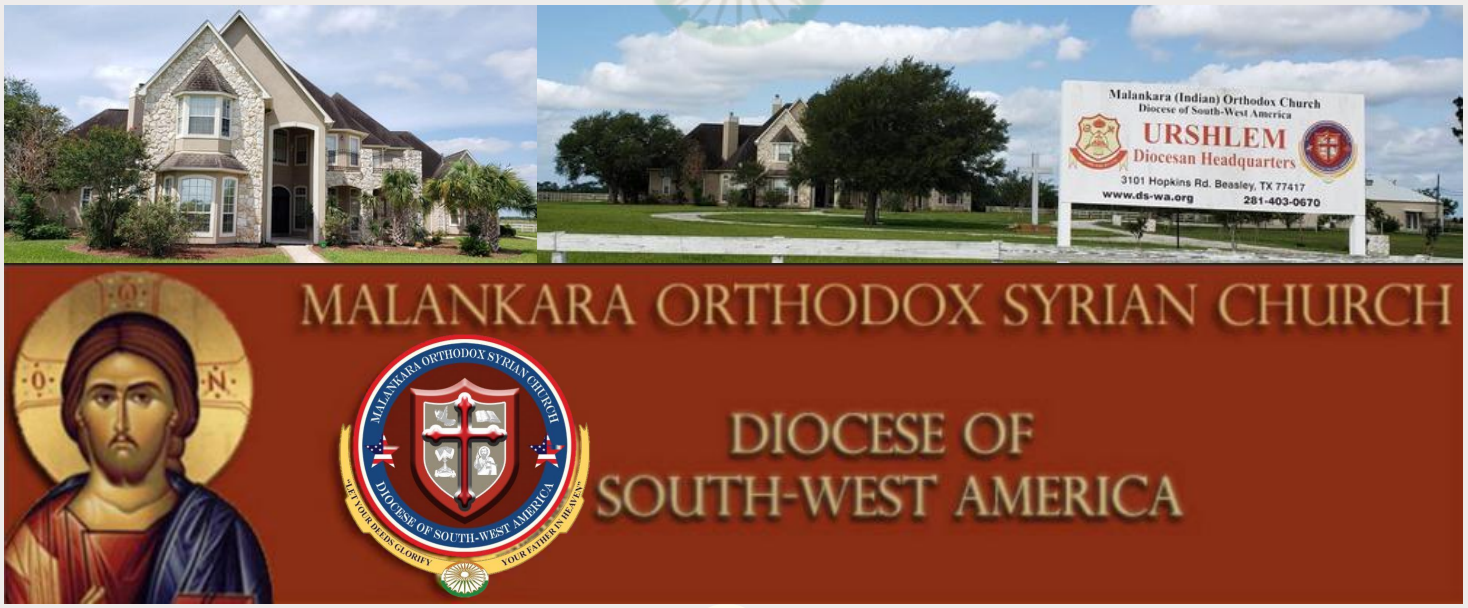
The year 2024 marked an unprecedented period of growth and development for the diocese, highlighted by the receipt of a transformative $7 million pledge from an anonymous benefactor. This extraordinary gift, initially distributed through the Denver Foundation, enabled the diocese to accelerate numerous development projects and strengthen its financial foundation. The diocese demonstrated exemplary stewardship by establishing proper oversight structures and dedicated bank accounts for these funds. A particularly historic development occurred on November 1, 2024, with the establishment of the Diocese of Canada under the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, covering four provinces with over 20 parishes and congregations, under the spiritual care of His Holiness the Catholicos of the East.

The year was further distinguished by His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III's apostolic visit in August to celebrate the golden jubilee of St. Thomas Cathedral in Houston. The diocese's charitable commitment was evidenced through the Wayanad Disaster Fund, which successfully raised over $122,000 for families affected by devastating landslides. Multiple new congregations were established across various regions, including Fort Worth, College Station, and Houston in Texas, and Regina in Canada. The year also saw numerous ordinations and elevations of clergy, reflecting the continued growth of clerical vocations within the diocese.

DIOCESAN HISTORY

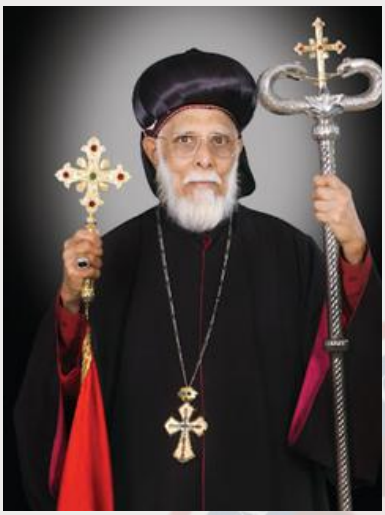
The current structure of the Diocese of South-West America operates under the leadership of the Diocesan Metropolitan as chief administrative officer, supported by the Diocesan Council elected for the 2022-2027 term. This council is composed of various representatives from several regions including Diocesan Secretary Rev. Fr. George (Sajeev) Mathews, Clergy Representatives Rev. Fr. Binu Mathews and Rev. Fr. George Ninan Manampuram, and Lay Representatives Mr. Prasad John, Mr. Alex Varghese, Mr. Bijoy Thomas, and Mr. Jason Thomas. This councils oversees the implementation of decisions made by the Diocesan Assembly. Overall, the diocese maintains all of its active spiritual organizations and ministries which include Sunday School, MGOCSM, MMVS, OCYM, and FOCUS, each serving specific demographic needs within the community of faithful.

Looking toward the future, the diocese has embarked on several major initiatives, including the further development of "Urshlem" as a comprehensive spiritual center. These plans include the construction of an aforementioned chapel, development of a cemetery project, establishment of an Orthodox village for elders, creation of conference facilities, etc. The vision extends to establishing a monastery and convent, representing the first of such institutions outside Kerala. With unprecedented resources from a 2024 anonymous donation and a clear strategic vision, the diocese is well-positioned to preserve Orthodox traditions while adapting to contemporary needs. As it moves forward, the Diocese of South-West America continues to serve as a testament to the dedication of countless clergy and laity who have contributed to its growth for over four decades, serving thousands of Orthodox Christians across multiple states while maintaining its commitment to preserving and promoting the ancient Orthodox faith in North America.

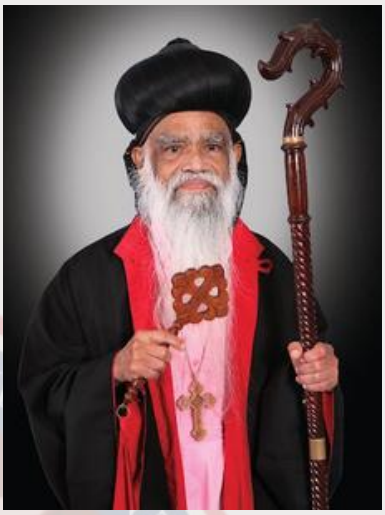


FORMER LEADERSHIP

PRIOR METROPOLITANS

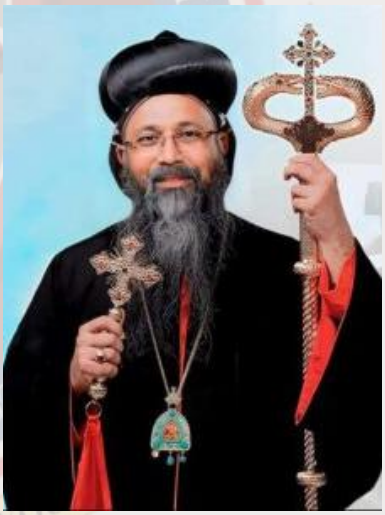


H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios
Metropolitan



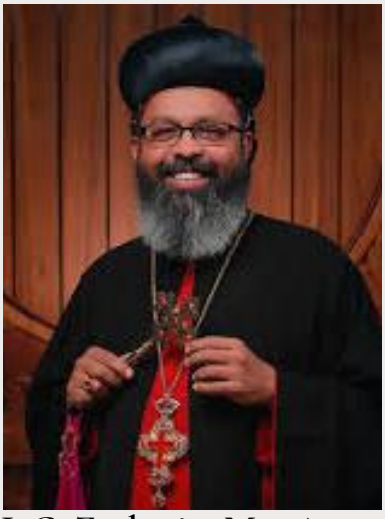
H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas
Metropolitan

H. G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos
Assistant Metropolitan



H. G. Alexios Mar Eusebiuss
Metropolitan

H. H. Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II
Metropolitan



H. G. Zacharias Mar Aprem
Assistant Metropolitan

FORMER LEADERSHIP

PRIOR OFFICE BEARERS

2009-2012

Rev. Fr. Thampan Varghese | Secretary
Rev. Fr. Binny M. Kuruvilla | Clergy Representative
Rev Fr Dr. Joy Pyngolil | Clergy Representative
Rev. Fr. Raju M. Daniel | Clergy Representative
Mr. Charly Varghese | Lay Representative
Mr. P. I. Joy | Lay Representative
Mr. Johnson Varghese | Lay Representative
Mr. George Panicker | Lay Representative
Rev. Dn. George Poovathur | Managing Committee
Dr. Zachariah Thomas | Managing Committee

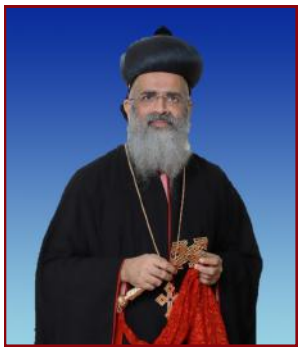
2012-2017

Rev. Fr. Dr. Joy Pyngolil | Secretary
Rev. Fr. Slomo Isac | Clergy Representative
Rev. Fr. Mathews (Sajeev) George | Clergy Representative
Mr. George Geevarghese | Lay Representative
Mr. Charly Varghese | Lay Representative
Mr. Elson Samuel | Lay Representative
Mr. Jason Varghese | Lay Representative
Rev. Fr. Raju M. Daniel | Managing Committee
Mr. P. I. Joy | Managing Committee
Mr. Thomas Rajan | Managing Committee

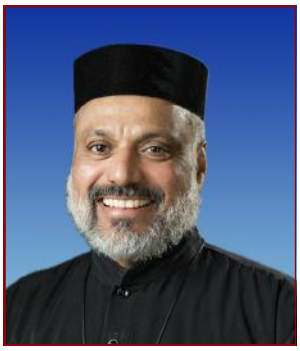
2017-2022

Rev. Fr. Philip (Roi) Abraham | Secretary
Rev. Fr. Binny M. Kuruvilla | Clergy Representative
Rev. Fr. Diju Skariah | Clergy Representative
Mr. Manoj Thomas | Lay Representative
Mr. Roy Thomas | Lay Representative
Mr. Abraham Varkey | Lay Representative
Mr. Selby Thomas | Lay Representative
Mr. Koshy Alexander | Auditor
Rev. Fr. Dr. Mathew Koshy | Managing Committee
Mr. Abraham Pannikottu | Managing Committee
Mr. George Geevarghese | Managing Committee

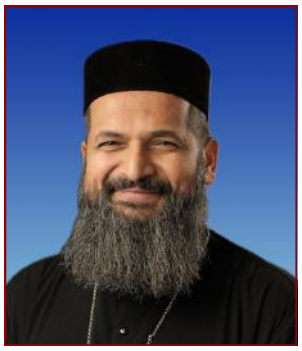
DIOCESAN COUNCIL
2022–2027



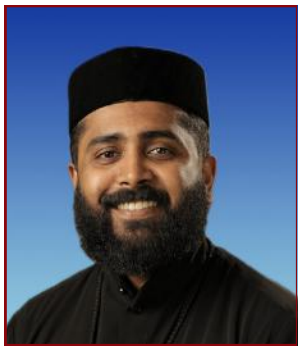
HIS GRACE THOMAS MAR IVANIOS
DIOCESAN
METROPOLITAN



REV. FR. MATHEWS GEORGE
DIOCESAN SECRETARY



REV. FR. BINU MATHEWS
CLERGY REPRESENTATIVE



REV. FR. GEORGE NINAN MANAMPURAM
CLERGY REPRESENTATIVE

MR. PRASAD JOHN
LAY
REPRESENTATIVE

MR. ALEX VARGHESE
LAY
REPRESENTATIVE

MR. BIJOY JACOB THOMAS
LAY
REPRESENTATIVE

MR. JASON THOMAS
LAY
REPRESENTATIVE

MR. KOSHY ALEXANDER
DIOCESAN
AUDITOR

MANAGING COMMITTEE
2022–2027

REV. FR. PHILIP ABRAHAM
CLERGY
REPRESENTATIVE

MR. NINAN MATHEWS
LAY
REPRESENTATIVE

MR. PHILIP MATHEW
LAY
REPRESENTATIVE

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY
& ASSOCIATION
2022–2027

REV. FR. SAM MATHEW • GABRIELSON EAPEN • VIVEK POTHEN • REV. FR. GEORGE DANIEL • JOHN VARGHESE • ALEX P. ABRAHAM • MATHEN MATHEW • JOSEPH KARIKADEMPAKEL • REV. FR. SANJEEV MARY OFFER • DEEPAK ALEXANDER • THOMAS EAPEN • REV. FR. DR. MATHEW KOSHY • BINU ALEX • THOMAS PHILIP • DANIEL GEORGE • REV. FR. GEORGE T. DAVID • GEORGE POOZHIKUNNEL • GEOJI PARET • VARGHESE PUNNOSE • PHILIP KUNNEL • REV. FR. ABI CHACKO • JASON THOMAS • DAVID BABU • CHRIS MATHEW • VARGHESE P. VARGHESE • THOMAS VAZHAYIL • KORAH POLACHIRA • REV. FR. THOMAS MATHEW • DR. BINU PHILIP • JACOB THOMAS • REV. FR HAM JOSEPH • DANIEL BABU • REJI ZACHARIAH • DN. GEORGE POOVATHUR • SHAJAN VARUGHESE • REV. FR. GEORGE S. VARUGHESE • JOSEPH GEORGE • BABU PAUL • REV. FR. GEORGE SAJEEV MATHEWS • KOCHUKOSHY ABRAHAM • ABEY DANIEL • REV. FR JAMES CHERIYAN • SUBIN GEORGE • ABRAHAM PANNIKOTTU • REV. FR. BINU MATHEWS • GIBSON MAMMEN • SONY ALEXANDER • REV. FR. PHILIP JACOB • SANJAY OOMMEN • JOSE P. SAM • OOMMEN I VARAPPADATHU • RAJU K. MARKOSE • REV. FR. JERRY JOHN MATHEW • DN. JOHN SANKARATHIL • REV. FR. JOSHUA (BINOY) GEORGE • CHACKO K. ITTY • ALEX VARGHESE • PHILIP CHAMATHIL • OOMMEN VETTIYIL • REV. FR. C. G. THOMAS • KURIAN VARGHESE ANJILIMOOTHIL • MATHEW GEEVARGHESE • BIJOY JACOB THOMAS • ROY KURIEN • ABRAHAM VARUGHESE (PRINCE) • JOHNSON KUNJAPPY • REV. FR. JOEL MATHEW • AJU THOMAS • REJU MATHEWS • CHANDY PULLOLICKAL • MATHEW ABRAHAM • REV. FR. JOHN KUNNATHUSSERIL

SUNNY THOMAS • STEAPHEN GEORGE • THOMAS JACOB • THOMAS JOBOY PHILIP • VERY REV. RAJU DANIEL CHOR-EPISCOPOS • SINI I. ABRAHAM • LINZ PHILIP • REV. FR. THAMPAN VARGHESE • SANTHOSH P. OOMMEN • THOMASKUTTY M. IDICULA • JOHNSON K. ISSAC • NEBU K. CHERIAN • REV. FR. P. C. GEORGE • KURIAN C. MATHEW • JOJI ALEX • REV. FR. BINNY KURUVILLA • PHILIP JACOB • BOBBY MATHEW ZACHARIAH • JESSU JOHN • KURIAN THOMAS • REV. FR. VARUGHESE THOMAS • YELDHO PETER • BENSON VARGHESE • ROY C. MATHEW • P. K. RAJAN • REV. FR. JAKE KURIAN • BINNY OONNOONNY • JOEL WILSON • CHARLY VARUGHESE • PHILIP K. PHILIPOSE • REV. FR. P. M. CHERIYAN • THOMAS IYPE • MATTHEWS MUNDACKAL • ROOY EAPEN • V. V. BABUKUTTY • KOSHY P. JOHN • JACOB C. KURUVILA • REV. FR. JOHNSON PUNCHAKONAM • VEETTINAL NINAN • SHERRY THOMAS • THOMAS VARGHESE • ANIL ABRAHAM • REV. FR. ISAC B. PRAKASH • ROY VARGHESE • RAJU SKARIA • SUNDEEP MATTAMANA • SHAJI K. YOHANNAN • FR. JOSEPH KALAPURAKAL • OOMMEN GEORGE • PHILIP MATHEW • REV. FR. DIJU SKARIAH • VINEET V. ALEX • RAJESH PAUL ALAPAT • REV. FR. CHACKO V. ISSAC • KOSHY ALEXANDER • ABEY VARGHESE • REV. FR. SAMUEL VARGHESE • SODHARAN VARUGHESE • STANLEY THOMAS • JOSE MATHEW • JOHNSON V BABY • REV. FR. YOHANNAN PANICKER • WILLIE JOHN JACOB • REV. FR. MATHUKUTTY VARGHESE • KOTTAKKAKATHU G. MAMACHEN • ABRAHAM V. MARKOSE • REV. FR. JOHN MATHEW • JACOB OOMMEN • HARSHA CHACKO • VERY REV. CHERIAN M. KUNNEL CHOR-EPISCOPOS • PRAVEEN THOMAS • TOM ZACHARIAH • REV. FR. DR. JACOB MATHEW • ROY EASO THOMAS • REV. FR. CYRIL DAVY • KURIAN VARUGHESE • THOMAS P. GEORGE • REV. FR. THOMAS MATHAI • JOY DANIEL • SHAJAN ABRAHAM • REV. FR. GEEVARGHESE MELVIN MATHAI • BIJOY GEORGE • M. V. CHACKO • REV. FR. SUNOJ OOMMEN • JASON VARUGHESE • VERY REV. BIJOY SAKHARIAH RAMBAN • THOMAS POOVATHOOR • KOSHY P. RAJAN • REV. FR. ABEY ABRAHAM • MATHEWKUTTY THUMPAMON • GINU GEEVARGHESE • REV. FR. SHAUN MATHEW • PANANGAYIL ALIAS • REV. FR. GEORGE JOHN • BIJU P. JOHN • BOBBY JOHN • REV. FR. JOHN (TEJI) ABRAHAM • SIVI VARGHESE • ANSON THARAYANIL • SAM JACOB MUTHIRAKALAYIL • MANOJ CHACKO • REV. FR. PHILIP ABRAHAM • JOSE THOMAS • JOSE THOMAS • REV. FR. T. U. JACOB • GEORGE T. SAMUEL • REV. FR. GEORGE NINAN MANAMPURAM • THOMAS GEORGE • VERY REV. MICHAEL HATCHER CHOR-EPISCOPOS • DAVID JOHNSON • VERY REV. GEORGE PAULOSE CHOR-EPISCOPOS • PRASAD V. JOHN • JOHN JACOB • REV. FR. ZERAH PAUL • ABRAHAM GEORGE • NINAN MATHEWS • REV. FR. P. M. ZACHARIAH • OOMMEN CHACKO • REV. FR. JOHN MATHEW • MATHEW M. VARUGHESE • PHILIP P. PARET • REV. FR. PHILIPS SANKARATHIL • SANJAY KURIAN

SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

Clergy Fellowship

Secretary: Rev. Fr. Mathew Koshy

Joint Secretary: Rev. Fr. Melvin Mathai

Baskiamo Association

Vice President: Rev. Fr. Thampan Varghese

Secretary: Mrs. Sapna Mary Mathews

MMVS

Vice President: Rev. Fr. Abey Abraham

General Secretary: Mrs. Shini Kurian Lijo

Treasurer: Mrs. Sheena Punnoose

Sunday School

Director: Rev. Fr. Jacob Mathew

OCYM

Vice President: Rev. Fr. Isac B. Prakash

FOCUS

Director: Rev. Fr. Renin Samuel

Divyabodhanam

Vice President: Rev. Fr. P. C. George

Secretary: Mr. Alex Varghese

Treasurer: Mrs. Gigi K Simon

MGOCSM

Director: Rev. Fr. Abi Chacko

General Secretary: Rev. Dn. Toby John

Joint Secretary: Mr. Stanley Joseph

Treasurer: Mrs. Shanika Jacob

SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

OVBS

Director: Rev. Fr. George Ninan Manampuram

AMOS

Vice President: Rev. Fr. Shinto David

Counseling

Director: Rev. Fr. Samuel Varghese

Secretary: Shawny Mathew

Committee: Emily Hatcher | Justina Thomas | Varsha Varghese

Media & Communications

Vice President: Rev. Fr. George Ninan Manampuram

Secretary: Mr. Justin George

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Managing Editor: Rev. Fr. Johnson Punchakonam

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Director: Rev. Fr. Joel Mathew

Project Manager: Mr. Jobby Jacob

Treasurer: Mr Jason Abraham

Committee: Rev. Fr. Saju Varghese | Rev. Fr. Jake Kurian | Rev. Dn. Alexander Hatcher

Senior Forum

Vice President: Very Rev. Raju Daniel Cor-Episcopos

Secretary: Rev. Fr. Merbin Mathai

The Voice Calling in the Wilderness-Bible Study

Director: Rev. Fr. Diju Skariah

Diocesan Online Weekly Schedule Details 2025

Sunday

DIVYABODHANAM CLASS

6:00 PM CST

POCE – English Class	POCE – Malayalam Class
Zoom ID: **863 7608 6073**	Zoom ID: **827 3238 6223**
Password: **237766**	Password: **854435**

Monday

SENIOR'S FORUM

8:00 PM CST

Zoom ID:
454 014 2273
Password:
DSWAsf

Tuesday

FAITH STUDIES

7:30 PM CST

Zoom ID:
880 5573 8628
Password:
243147

Wednesday

SUBORO PRAYER

10:30 AM CST

Phone #:
646 769 9900
Password:
14019#

Thursday

THE VOICE:
CALLING IN THE WILDERNESS

8:00 PM CST

Zoom ID:
966 7546 8996
Password:
403123

Friday

MMVS PRAYER

10:30 AM CST

Zoom ID:
429 335 8889
Password:
1516

BARNABAS SCHOLARSHIP

MAR BARNABAS EDUCATIONAL AWARD WAS INSTITUED BY OUR DIOCESE IN 2011 TO COMMEND THE YOUTH WHO HAVE EXCELLED IN THEIR ACADEMICS WHILE MAINTAINING THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH. EACH YEAR TWELFTH GRADE GRADUATES, WHO ARE ENTERING THEIR FIRST YEAR OF THIER POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, HAVE BEEN INVITED TO APPLY FOR THE AWARD.

COMMITTEE

REV. FR. MATHEW (MAT) ALEXANDER

MRS. TEENA JOSHUA

MR. PRASAD. V. JOHN

DIOCESAN METROPOLITAN & DIOCESAN SECRETARY

MAKARIOS SCHOLARSHIP

MAR MAKARIOS EDUCATIONAL AWARD WAS INSTITUED BY OUR DIOCESE IN 2023 TO COMMEND THE YOUTH WHO HAVE EXCELLED IN THEIR ACADEMICS WHILE MAINTAINING THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH, THE DIOCESE, AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH. EACH YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRADUATES, WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THEIR EDUCATION, HAVE BEEN INVITED TO APPLY FOR THE AWARD.

COMMITTEE

VERY REV, CHERIAN SUNNY KUNNEL COR-EPISCOPA

REV. FR. CYRIL DAVY

MR. KENNY VARGHESE

MS. LATHA SAJAN

MR. BIJOY THOMAS

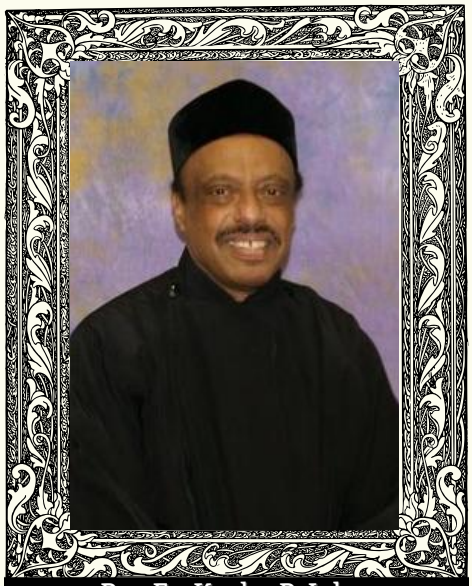
DIOCESAN METROPOLITAN & DIOCESAN SECRETARY

OUR SPIRITUAL FATHERS
THE CLERGY

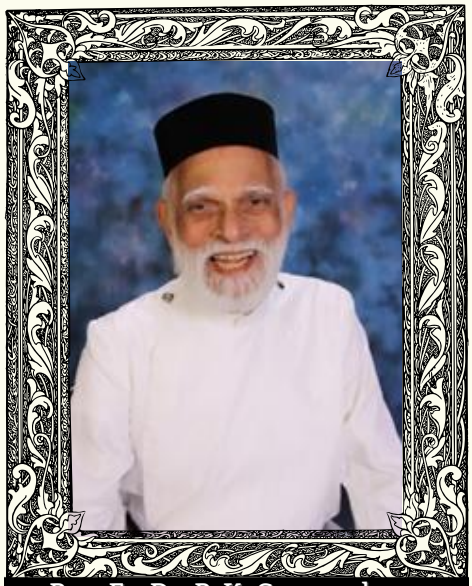
DEPARTED PRIESTS

Rev. Fr. Dr. Zach P. Zachariah
(1994)

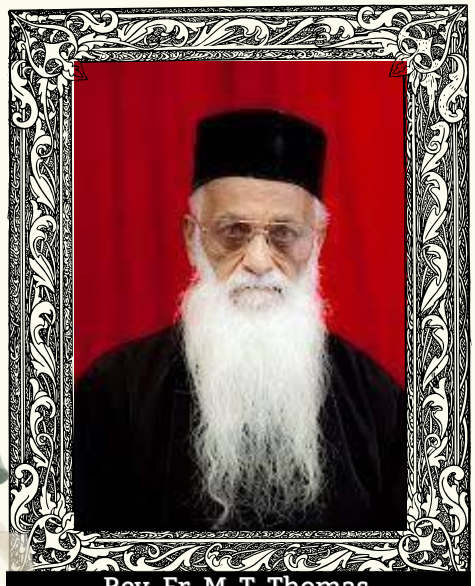
Very Rev. Koshy Poovathur
Cor-Episcopos (2008)



Rev Fr. Koshy P. John
(2018)



Rev. Fr. Dr. P. K. Geevarghese
(2018)

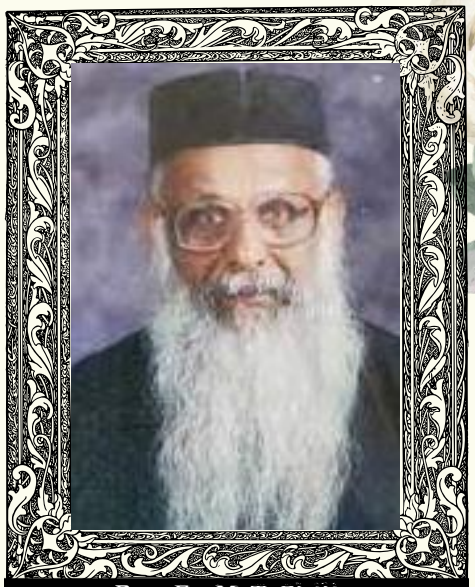


Rev. Fr. M. T. Thomas
(2019)

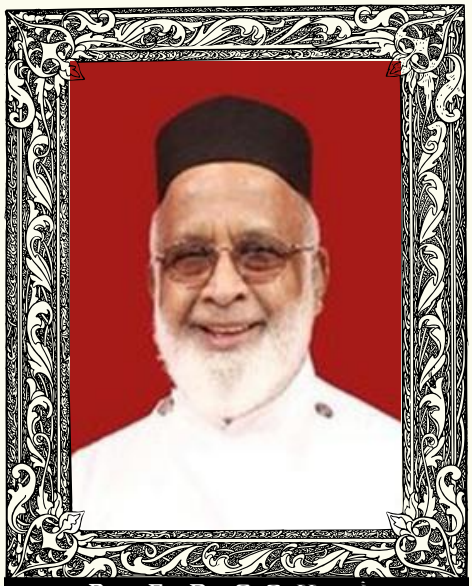
Rev. Fr. Daniel K. George
(2020)

DEPARTED PRIESTS

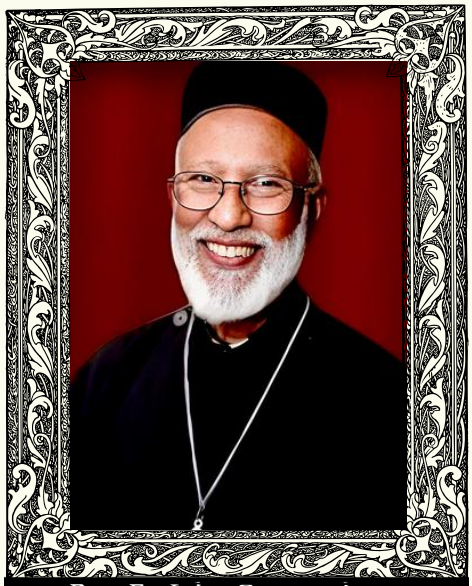
Rev. Fr. Dr. M. K. Thomas
(2020)



Rev. Fr. M. T. Philip
(2021)



Rev. Fr. Dr. C. O. Vargis
(2022)



Rev. Fr. John Geevarghese
(2023)

Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker
(2025)

"I have fought the good fight,

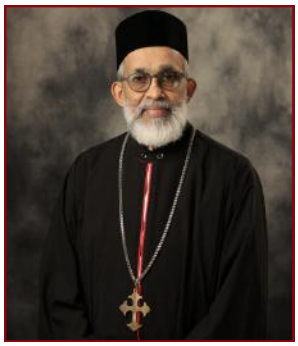
I have finished the race,

I have kept the faith."

2 Timothy 4:7

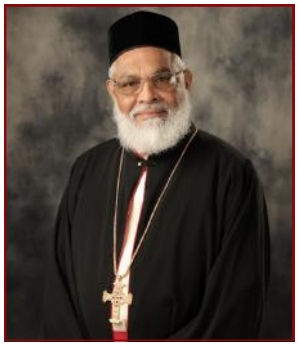
CLERGY DIRECTORY

VERY REV. C. G. THOMAS COR-EPISCOPOS



Region: South
Appointment: Retired
Address: 2508 Pecan Grove Court, Irving, TX 75060
Home Phone: (972) 790-4406 | Cell Phone: (469) 499-6559
Email: revfrcgthomas@gmail.com

VERY REV. CHERIAN (SUNNY) KUNNEL COR-EPISCOPOS



Region: South
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 417 Cactus Road, Yukon, OK 73099-6822
Cell Phone: (405) 833-3795
Email: sunnykunnel@hotmail.com

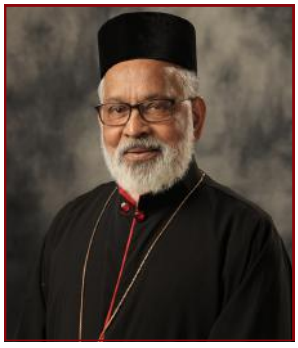
VERY REV. GEORGE PAULOSE COR-EPISCOPOS

Region: Southeast
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios, Tampa
Address: 9436 Hunter's Pond Drive, Tampa, FL 33647
Home Phone: (813) 991-4728 | Cell Phone: (813) 838-1756
Email: frgpaulose22@gmail.com

VERY REV. GHEEVARGHIS AROOPALA COR-EPISCOPOS

Region: South
Appointment: Retired
Address: 3246 Shadow View Ln, Missouri City, TX 77459
Home Phone: (281) 778-9342 | Cell Phone: (281) 969-7461
Email: aroopalaachen@gmail.com

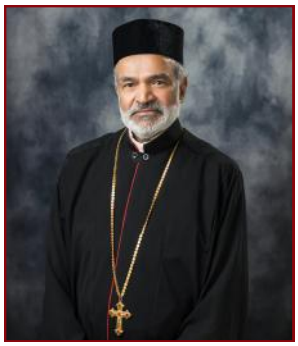
VERY REV. JOHN KUNNATHUSSERIL COR-EPISCOPOS



Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St Mary’s, Carrollton (Dallas)
Address: 225 Simmons Drive, Coppell, TX 75019-3306
Home Phone: (972) 462-8246 | Cell Phone: (972) 523-9656
Email: revjohnka@yahoo.com

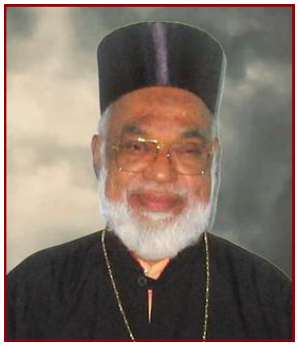
CLERGY DIRECTORY

VERY REV. K. G. PHILIPOSE COR-EPISCOPOS



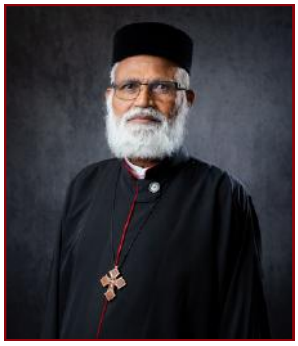
Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Ephrem's, Fort Worth
Address: 5209 Cedar Mountain Dr, McKinney, TX 75071
Home Phone: (706) 364-8761 | Cell Phone: (617) 947-3912
Email: venomoneyachen@gmail.com

VERY REV. KURIAKOSE THOTTUPURAM COR-EPISCOPOS, PHD



Region: Midwest
Appointment: Retired
Address: 277 E. Gladys Ave, Elmhurst, IL 60126
Home Phone: (773) 480-7273 | Cell Phone: (773) 237-4845
Email: drkct@hotmail.com

VERY REV. MAMMEN P. MATHEW COR-EPISCOPOS

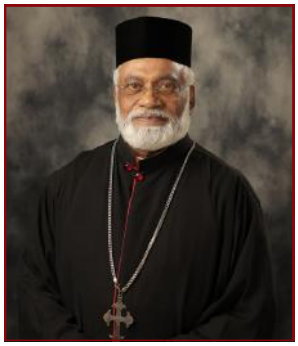


Region: South
Appointment: Retired
Address: 610 Beverley Circle, Stafford, TX 77477
Home Phone: (281) 499-5414 | Cell Phone: (281) 788-0459
Email: frmammen@gmail.com, frmammen@hotmail.com

VERY REV. MICHAEL HATCHER COR-EPISCOPOS

Region: Northwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios Mission, Spokane
Address: 4804 E Sumac Dr, Spokane, WA 99223
Home Phone: (509) 859-7011 | Cell Phone: (509) 325-6432
Email: gulmohr.stgregorios@gmail.com

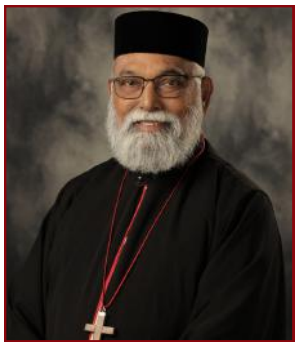
VERY REV. N. K. ITTANPILLAI COR-EPISCOPOS



Region: Southeast
Appointment: Officating Priest
Address: 9719 SW 56th Circle, Ocala, FL 34476
Cell Phone: (845) 671-2024
Email: N/A

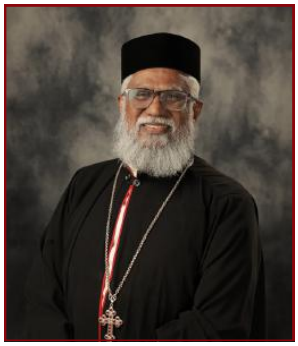
CLERGY DIRECTORY

VERY REV. PHILIPS G. SANKARATHIL COR-EPISCOPOS



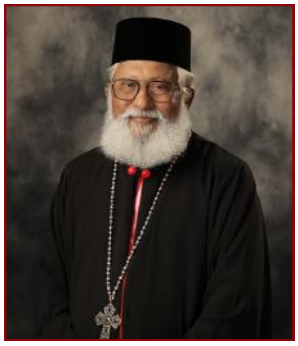
Region: Southeast
Appointment: Vicar, St. Mary's, Fort Myers (Naples)
Address: 1136 Darling St., E Lehigh Acres, FL 33974
Cell Phone: (469) 951-2250
Email: frphilipssankarathil@hotmail.com

VERY REV. RAJU M. DANIEL COR-EPISCOPOS



Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. George, Irving (Dallas)
Address: 3905 Wallingford Dr, Garland, TX 75043
Cell Phone: (214) 476-6584
Email: frdanielraju@yahoo.com | frdanielraju84@gmailcom

VERY REV. V. C. VARGHESE COR-EPISCOPOS, PHD



Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios, McAllen
Address: 5219 Willow Cliff Ln. Sugar Land, TX 77479
Home Phone: (281) 980-1658 | Cell Phone: (832) 766-2996
Email: fathervc@gmail.com

REV. SAKHARIAH (BIJOY) RAMBAN

Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Mary's, San Antonio
Address: 4990 View Dr, San Antonio, TX 78228
Phone: (346) 754-3374
Email: bijoyzak@gmail.com

REV. FR. ABRAHAM (ABI) CHACKO

Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios, Elmhurst
Address: 552 N Ellsworth Ave. Addison, IL 60101
Phone: (516) 655-0117
Email: Fr.AbiChacko@gmail.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

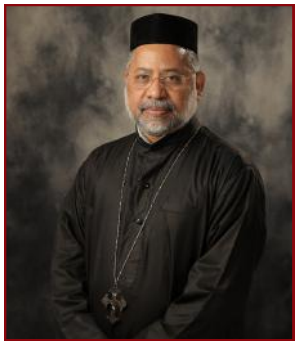
REV. FR. ABEY ABRAHAM

Region: Southeast
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 117 SE 10th Ave, Pompano Beach, FL 33060
Phone: (832) 888-9296
Email: Abeyabraham5090@gmail.com

REV. FR. BASALI MATHEW

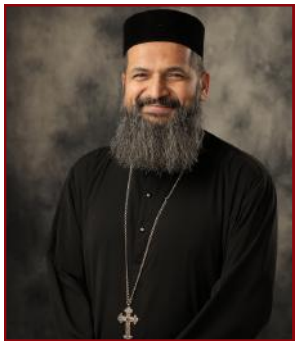
Region: West
Appointment: Vicar, St. Mary's, San Fernando Valley
Address: Los Angeles, CA
Phone: (224) 425-0278
Email: Basali94@gmail.com

REV. FR. BINNY KURUVILLA



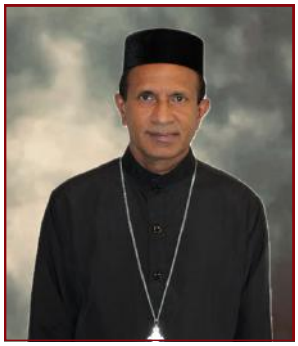
Region: Southeast
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios, Jacksonville
Address: 9131 Eaton Ave, Jacksonville, FL 32211
Cell Phone: (904) 994-7112
Email: frbinnyk@yahoo.co.in

REV. FR. BINU MATHEWS



Region: South
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 1613 Primrose Pl, Allen, TX 75002
Phone: (210)687-6192
Email: mathewz.binu@gmail.com

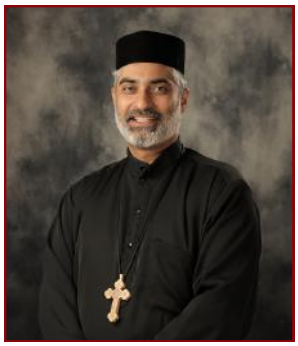
REV. FR. CHACKO V. ISSAC



Region: South
Appointment: Asst. Vicar, St. Mary's Valliyapally, Dallas
Address: 3008 Brush Creek Lane, Flower Mound, TX 75028
Home Phone: (314) 439-0480 | Cell Phone: (314) 489-7956
Email: chackoissac@gmail.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. CHRISTOPHER MATHEW



Region: South
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 3324 Chandler Hollow Lane, Missouri City, TX 77459
Phone: (281) 989-4327
Email: fr.christophermathew@gmail.com

REV. FR. CYRIL DAVY

Region: Southeast
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Email: frcyrildavy@gmail.com

REV. FR. DIJU SKARIAH

Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. James Mission, Dallas
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REV. FR. GEORGE (BENNY) DANIEL

Region: Southeast
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Email: bennyachen@yahoo.com

REV. FR. GEORGE (SHINTO) DAVID

Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Chicago
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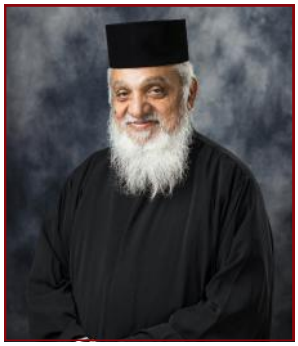
Phone: (586) 746-4869
Email: davidshinto@yahoo.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. GEORGE (RAJIV) HATCHER

Region: Northwest
Appointment: Asst. Vicar, St. Gregorios, Spokane
Address: 524 S Ferrall St. Spokane, WA 99202
Phone: (509) 496-1014
Email: frgeorgehatcher@gmail.com



REV. FR. GEORGE JOHN

Region: Southeast
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios, South Florida
Address: 9441 SW 53rd Street Cooper City, FL 33328
Home Phone: (954) 680-3077 | Cell Phone: (954) 701-3413
Email: georgejohnachen@gmail.com

REV. FR. GEORGE (BENNY) C. MATHEW

Region: Southeast
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Charlotte
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Email: gm521@yahoo.com

REV. FR. GEORGE NINAN MANAMPURAM

Region: West
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Seattle
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Phone: (425) 340-4362
Email: fr.george.manampuram@gmail.com

REV. FR. GEORGE (SAJEEV) MATHEWS

Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Peter's & St. Paul's, Houston
Address: 5618 Bending Crest Ct, Sugarland, TX
Home Phone: (281) 572-0631 | Cell Phone: (210) 995-7602
Email: frmathews10@gmail.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. HAM JOSEPH

Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios Cathedral, Bellwood
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Home Phone: (847) 594-5790 | Cell Phone: (708) 856-7490
Email: hamjoseph@gmail.com

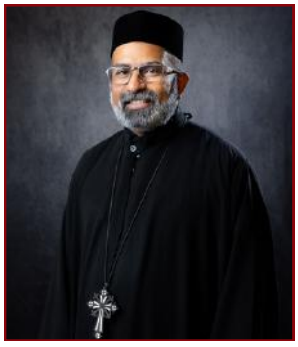
REV. FR. IMMANUEL (AMAL) PUNNOOSE

Region: West
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Phoenix
Address: 2538 W Bowker St, Phoenix, AZ 85041
Phone: (678) 793-3037
Email: apunnoose93@gmail.com

REV. FR. ISAC B. PRAKASH

Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas Cathedral, Houston
Address: 6314 Fiddlers Green Dr, Missouri City, TX 77459
Phone: (832) 997-9788
Email: ibp2@hotmail.com

REV. FR. JACOB MATHEW, PHD



Region: Southeast
Appointment: Officiating Priest, St. Paul's, Orlando
Address: 366 Brentwood Club Cove, Longwood, FL 32750
Home Phone: (407) 306-8318 | Cell Phone: (407) 970-9090
Email: abiagatha@gmail.com

REV. FR. JAKE KURIEN

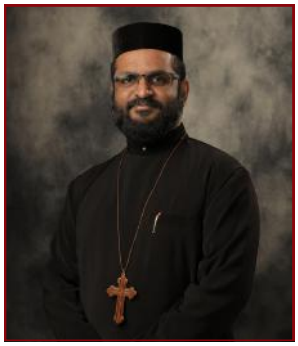
Region: South
Appointment: Multiple, See Church Directory
Address: 4127 Breakwood Dr, Houston, TX 77025
Phone: (832) 289-8027
Email: kurian.jake@gmail.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. JAMES CHERIYAN

Region: Midwest
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 1252 W. Aurora Rd, Macedonia, OH 44139
Phone: (586) 215-3952
Email: brjamescheriyan@gmail.com

REV. FR. JERRY JOHN MATHEW



Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Mary's, Detroit
Address: 8335 Riverland Drive Apt 5, Sterling Heights, MI 48310
Phone: (414) 249-1879
Email: jerryjohnmathew@gmail.com

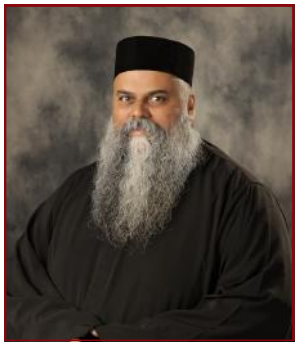
REV. FR. JITHIN ZACHARIAH

Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St Gregorios, Kansas City
Address: 29629 W 196 St, Gardner, KS 66216
Phone: (469) 682-3290
Email: jithinprime@gmail.com

REV. FR. JOEL MATHEW

Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St Gregorios, Dallas
Address: 1618 Silverleaf Ln, Allen, TX 75002
Phone: (214) 232-5286
Email: joelmathew7@gmail.com

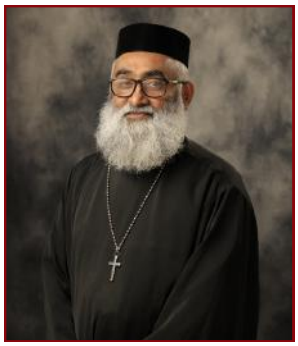
REV. FR. JOHN (TEJI) ABRAHAM



Region: South
Appointment: Asst. Vicar, St. Thomas Cathedral, Houston
Address: 15661 Washington Ave, San Lorenzo, CA 94580
Home Phone: (510) 690-4599 | Cell Phone: (469) 644-2800
Email: tejiabraham47@gmail.com

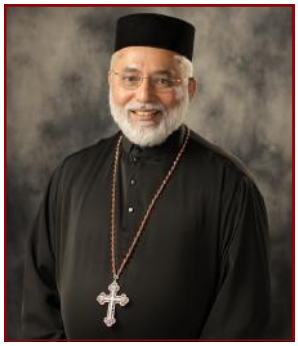
CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. JOHN MATHEWS



Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Lufkin
Address: 1631 Brighton Downs, Irving, TX 75060
Phone: (214) 985-7014
Email: frjohnmm@gmail.com

REV. FR. JOHNSON PUNCHAKONAM

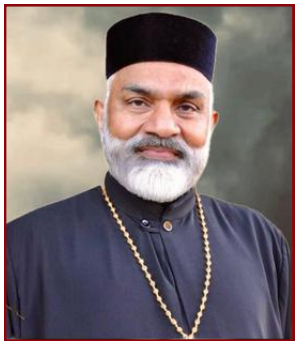


Region: South
Appointment: Asst. Vicar, St. Thomas Cathedral, Houston
Address: 2006 Rock Prairie CT Pearland, TX 77581
Home Phone: (770) 972-9222 | Cell Phone: (770) 310-9050
Email: revfrj@gmail.com

REV. FR. JOICE PAPPAN

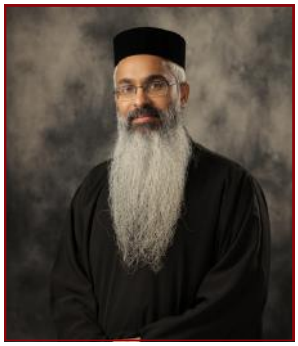
Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Mary's, Oak Lawn
Address: 17243 Grange Drive, Orland Park, IL 60467
Phone: (718) 419-1838
Email: joiceachen@gmail.com

REV. FR. JOSEPH KALAPURAYIL



Region: Southeast
Appointment: N/A
Address: 19 Russkin Ln, Palm Coast, FL 32164
Phone: (904) 405-4116
Email: fr.jkalapurayil@hotmail.com

REV. FR. JOSHUA (BINOY) GEORGE



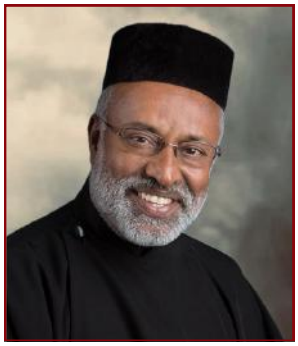
Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Mary's Valiyapally, Dallas
Address: 310 Wooded Glen Dr, Sunnyvale, TX 75182
Phone: (214) 642-4669
Email: fr.binoygeorge@gmail.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. JOSHUA VARUGHESE

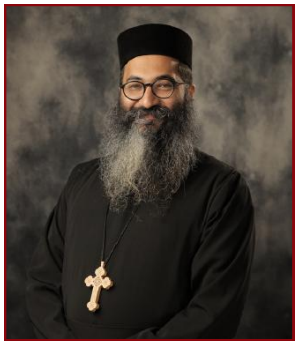
Region: South
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 4427 Peloton Rd, Manvel, TX 77578
Phone: (832)454-0011
Email: Joshuavarughese11@gmail.com

REV. FR. JOY PYNGOLIL, PHD



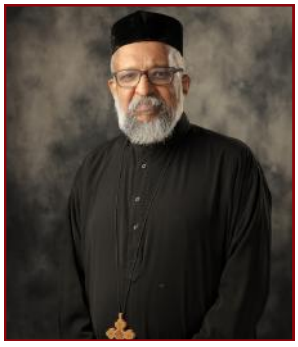
Region: Southeast
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Hollywood
Address: 12811 Country Glen Drive, Cooper City, FL 33330
Home Phone: (954) 376-6573 | Cell Phone: (772) 633-5728
Email: jpyngolil@gmail.com

REV. FR. MATHEW (MAT) ALEXANDER



Region: South
Appointment: Youth Minister, Dallas
Address: 3512 Sorghum Way McKinney, TX 75071
Phone: (314) 265-1046
Email: frmatalexander@gmail.com

REV. FR. MATHEW (BIJU) KOSHY, PHD



Region: Southeast
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 1880 Glenhurst Dr, Snellville, GA 30078
Home Phone: (770) 279-7021 | Cell Phone: (404) 849-0796
Email: frmathewkoshy@hotmail.com

REV. FR. MATHEW POOZHIKUNNEL

Region: West
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios, San Francisco
Address: 4723 Greenwood St, Skokie, IL 60076
Phone: (847) 903-1757
Email: kuttaie@gmail.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. MATHEW (SHAUN) T. MATHEW

Region: N/A
Appointment: N/A
Address: 805 Glen Parkway Hollywood, FL 33021
Phone: (720) 296-9216
Email: kasheesho@hotmail.com

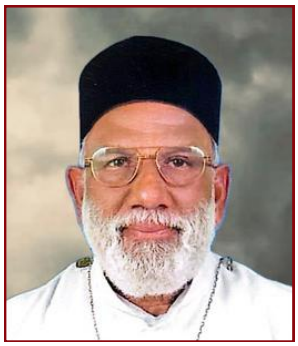
REV. FR. MELVIN G. MATHAI

Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St Mary's, St.Louis
Address: 11 Laurewood Dr. St.Peters MO 63376
Phone: (954) 743-6521
Email: Mlvnmat12@gmail.com | Fr.mgm12@gmail.com

REV. FR. MERBIN GEE JOSE

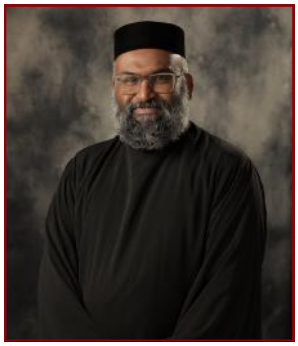
Region: South
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Denver
Address: 6618 S Alkire St, Apt 1525, Littleton, CO 80127
Phone: (469) 905-7481
Email: merb1991@gmail.com

REV. FR. M. ZACHARIAH



Region: South
Appointment: Retired
Address: 4120 South Deframe Street, Morrison, CO 80465-1424
Phone: (303) 697-2943
Email: frmzachariah@gmail.com

REV. FR. P. C. GEORGE



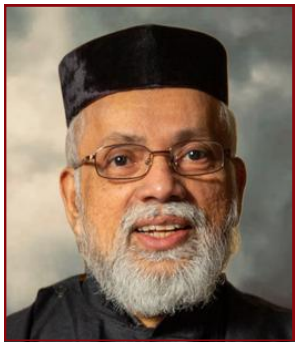
Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Gregorios, Detroit
Address: 3724 Alderdale Dr, Sterling Heights, MI 48310
Home Phone: (248) 247-5685 | Cell Phone: (248) 805-3223
Email: fr.georgepc@gmail.com

CLERGY DIRECTORY

REV. FR. PHILIP (ROI) ABRAHAM

Region: West
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
Address: 14341 Sequoia Rd, Canyon Country, CA 91387
Home Phone: (661) 367-4478 | Cell Phone: (661) 714-2364
Email: Roiachen2022@gmail.com

REV. FR. PHILIP JACOB



Region: Midwest
Appointment: Vicar, St. Thomas, Detroit
Address: 42618 Christina Drive, Sterling Heights, MI, 48313
Home Phone: (586) 781-0648 | Cell Phone: (586) 246-8319
Email: pjacob111@aol.com

REV. FR. P. M. CHERIYAN

Region: South
Appointment: Multiple (See Church Directory)
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REV. FR. P.M. ZACHARIAH

Region: Southeast
Appointment: Retired
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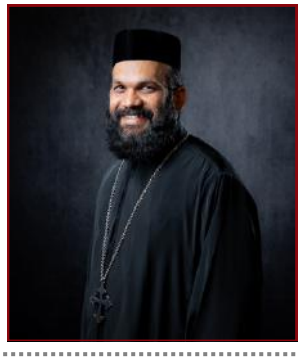
REV. FR. RAJESH K. JOHN



Region: South
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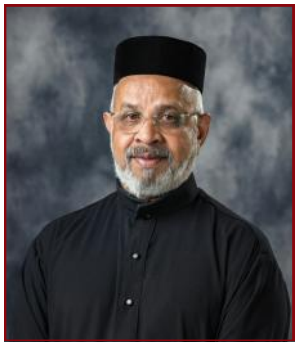

REV. FR. SAM MATHEW

Region: South
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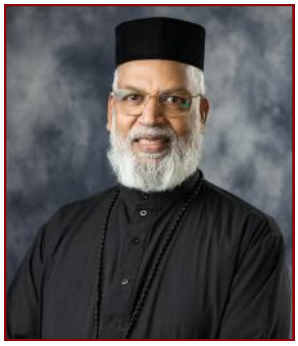
REV. FR. THAMPAN VARGHESE



Region: South
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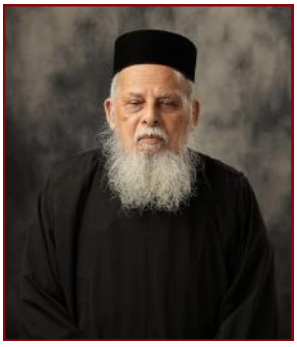
REV. FR. V. T. THOMAS



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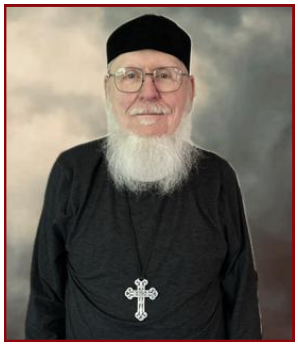
REV. DN. GABRIEL R. PIKE



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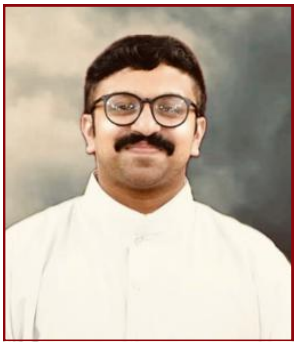

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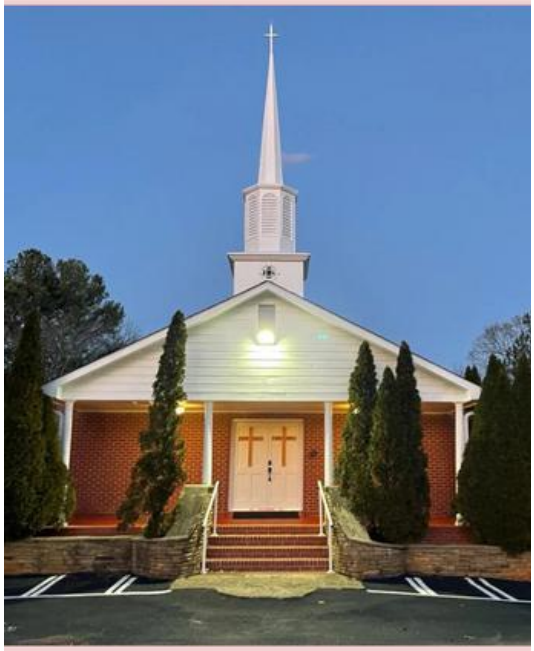

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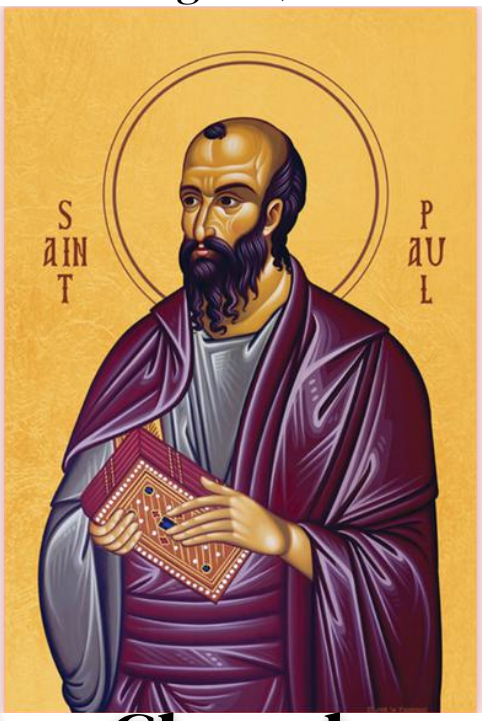

St. Paul's Orthodox Church, Chattanooga

http://www.stthomassouthflorida.com

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Vicar: Rev. Fr. George John

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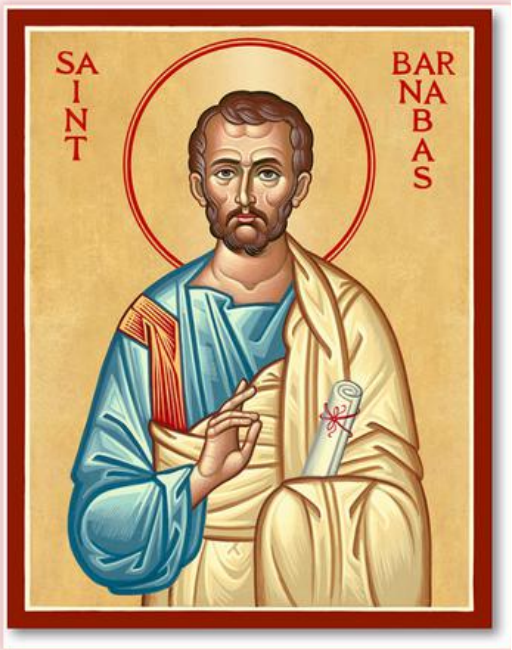
https://www.facebook.com/p/St-Barnabas-Indian-Orthodox-Congregation-of-Nashville-61556665231520/



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Cor-Episcopos

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Philipose Cor-Episcopos

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Vicar: Rev. Fr. George (Benny) C Mathew

St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Memphis

https://www.facebook.com/people/St-George-Indian-Orthodox-Congregation-Louisville-KY/61556547103020/

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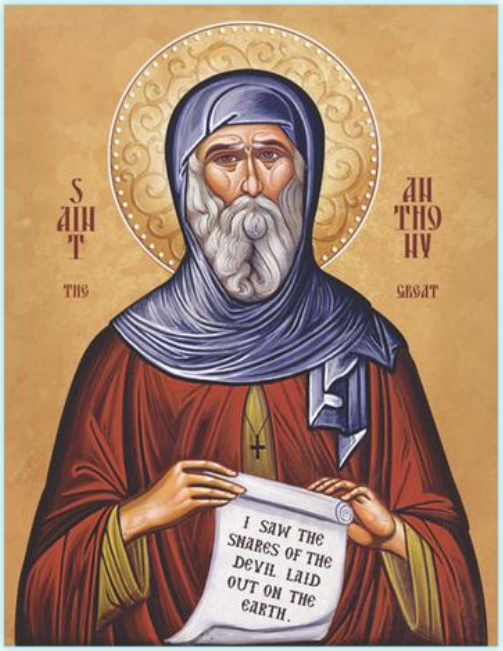

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Vicar: Rev. Fr. James Cheriyan

St. Joseph's Orthodox Congregation, Dayton

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151 Saint Cin Ln, Hazelwood, MO 63042

Vicar: Rev. Fr. Melvin G Mathai

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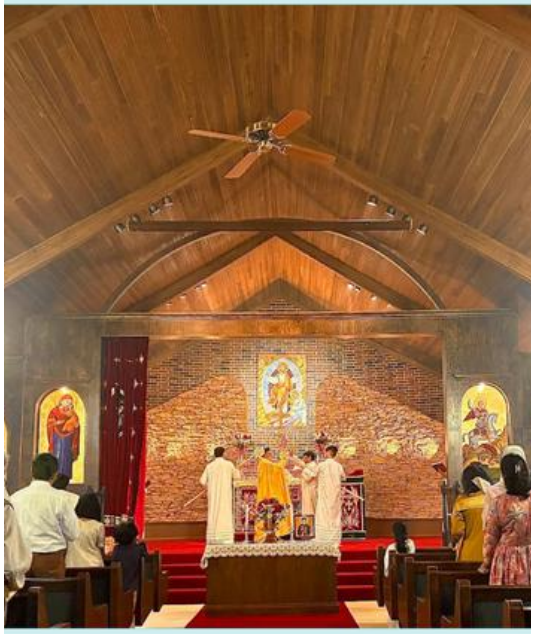
https://sgockc.org



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St. Mary's Orthodox Church, San Fernando Valley

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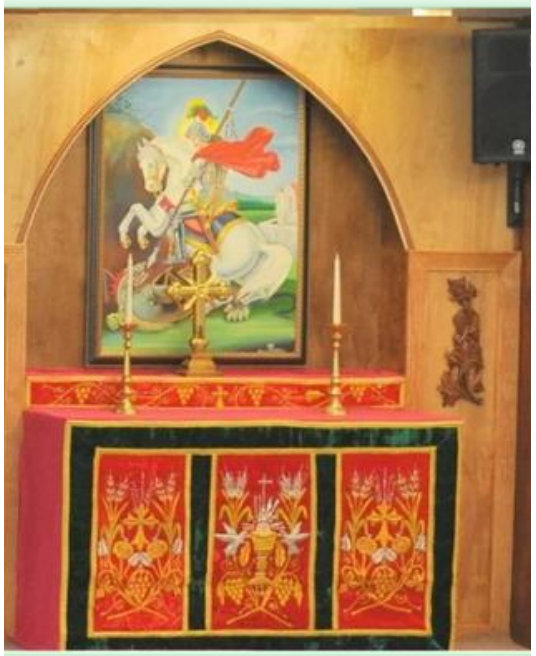
5500 Ehrhardt Ave, Sacramento, CA 95823



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St. George Orthodox Church, Sacramento

https://stmarysorthodoxlasvegas.com/

240 S Cholla St #240,
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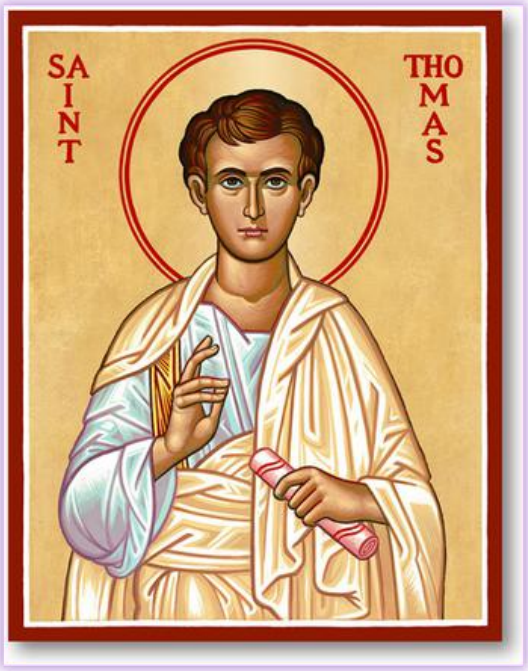

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x

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Asst. Vicar: Rev. Fr. Binu Mathews

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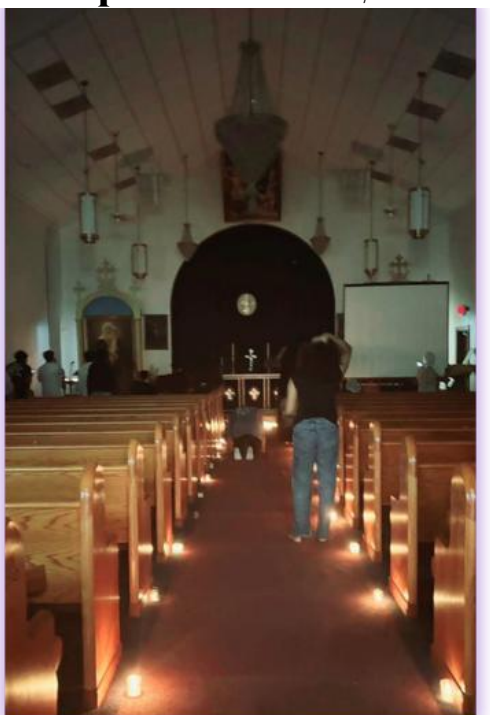

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Asst. Vicar: Rev. Fr. Joshua
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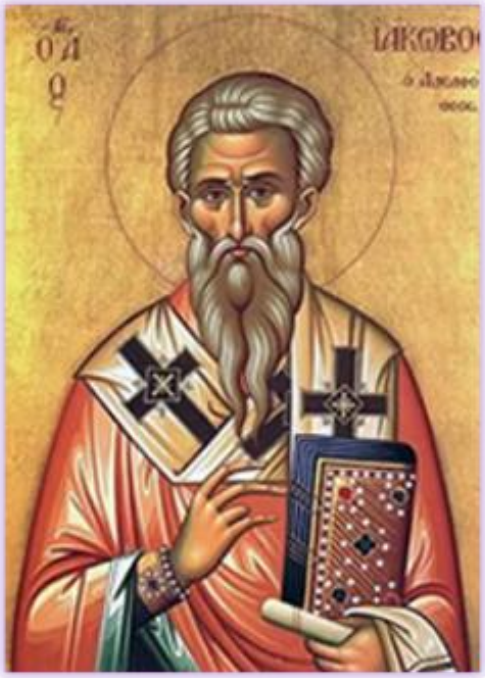

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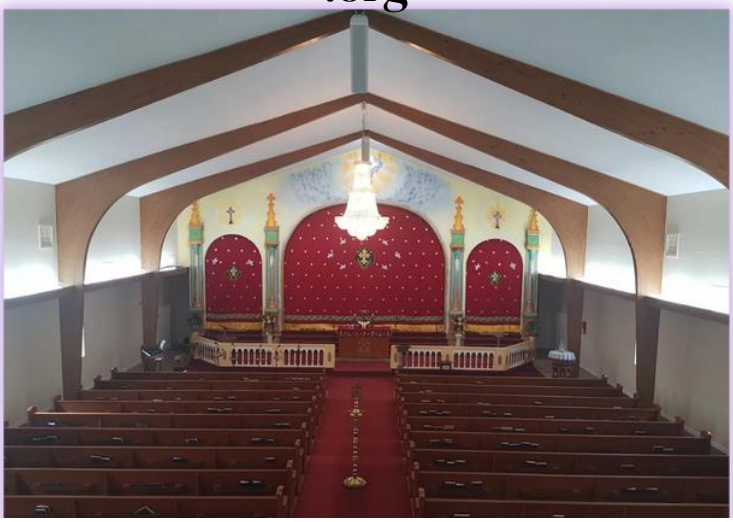

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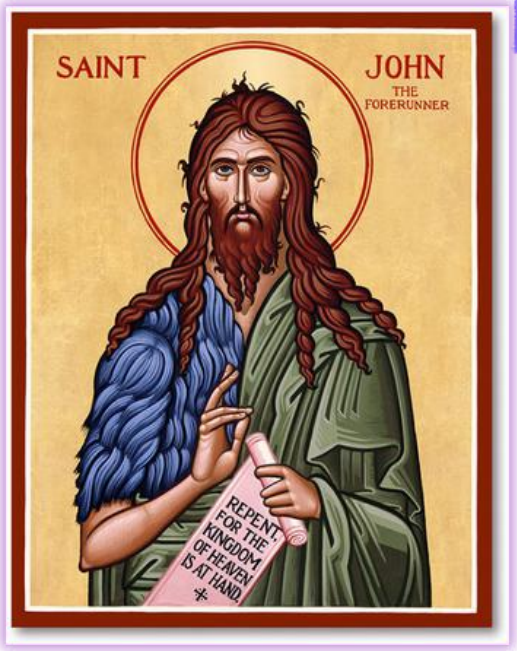

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RECONCILIATION & HEALING
A FURTHER DIVE

HEALING & RECONCILIATION ACCORDING TO THE LENTEN PRAYERS OF WEST SYRIAN TRADITION

REV. FR. JACOB KURIAN, PHD

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (The Indian Orthodox Syrian Church) follows the West Syrian (Syriac) Liturgical Tradition. West Syrian (Syriac) Liturgical Tradition has its most beautiful expression in the Lenten Prayers. There is a profound combination of spiritual insight, theological vision and scriptural basis in the Lenten Liturgy in general and the Lenten Canonical Prayers (Canonical Hours) in particular. These prayers are full of exhortations for inner healing and reconciliation. A prayer said sincerely is a life lived meaningfully. Here, we aim at a quick survey of the Lenten Prayers, particularly the Nineveh Lenten and the Quadragesimal Lenten Prayers.

There seems to be conscious or unconscious emphasis – difference with regard to the 'type' of reconciliation in the Nineveh Lenten Prayers and the Quadragesimal Lenten Prayers. In the Nineveh Lenten Prayers, the dominant element is the reconciliation with God whereas in the Quadragesimal Lenten Prayers the dominant element is the mutual reconciliation of humans and based on acts of charity and love.

I. The Nineveh Lenten Prayers and the Reconciliation with God.

If we can summarize the full thrust of Nineveh Lenten Prayers, it would be a petition to God for accepting the repentance of the Church of par faith with that of Nineveh which was a gentile and barbarian city even. A close survey of the Nineveh Lenten Prayers will reveal that there were few steps of repentance activated in Nineveh. These four steps are also indirectly suggested as steps in the ladder of Church repentance.

Firstly, Nineveh listened to the words of Jonah the Hebrew Prophet with due seriousness. For example, the 3rd stanza bouzo of Mar Jacob, in the Monday evening prayer: "Nineveh gathered together willingly for penitential supplication without doubting the word that was spoken to them. It listened to Jonah and agreed to accept everything that he told them. It corrected the way of life and received the word of God" (Unilateral Submission to the Word of God).

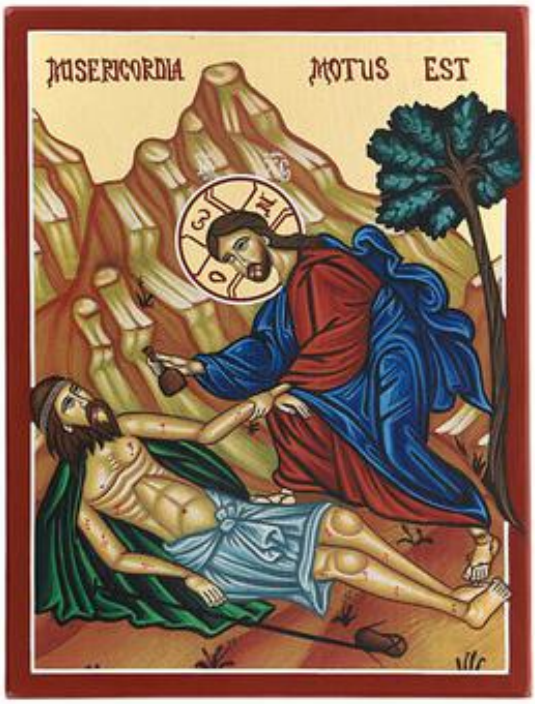
Secondly, the initiative for repentance started with the king's royal household and the nobles. For example, 1st stanza of the 1st qolo of 3rd hour of Wednesday: "The king left his adorned chamber and the beautiful palace. He stepped stripped off linen and silk clothes and removed the diadem from his head. He wept with sorrow and his nobles and princes also wept with him." (There should be good initiation and models for repentance in the leadership).

Thirdly, the penitential act was so sincere and strict that even the animals and the breast-feeding babies were not spared. For example, the second stanza of Quqoyo in the Second Qaumo in Tuesday Leilyo: "...we had all put on sackcloth, withheld milk from the mouth of the infants; men and animals did not taste anything until the arrival of the voice that the Lord has recorded..." (The entire creation should hear a corresponding share in penance).

Fourthly, there was complete change in the way of and style of life. For example, the second stanza of second qolo in the Wednesday Lilyo: "If the Ninevites repented and were saved from wrath and left the way of evil and all sorts of sins, how much more will one be saved who loves fasting and sheds tears for his debts with remorse" (Reconciliation with God is based on a clear change of life).

There are few lessons we learn from the above with regard to reconciliation and healing.

1. There should be prophetic intervention with inner credibility to reach the people at all times. "Where there is no prophetic vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). It is relevant to note here that our times are marked by a typical timidity on the part of those who are expected to be 'prophetic'.
2. Penitential/meaningful action should start from the top, no matter whether it is religious or secular. The days of exhortations for its own sake are gone. "We need no more 'teachers' but only example" (Pope John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope)
3. Any change of heart anywhere for positive result, as illustrated by the city of Nineveh, will be so integral and holistic as to touch all dimensions of life. Justice of God and cosmic harmony are integrally related.

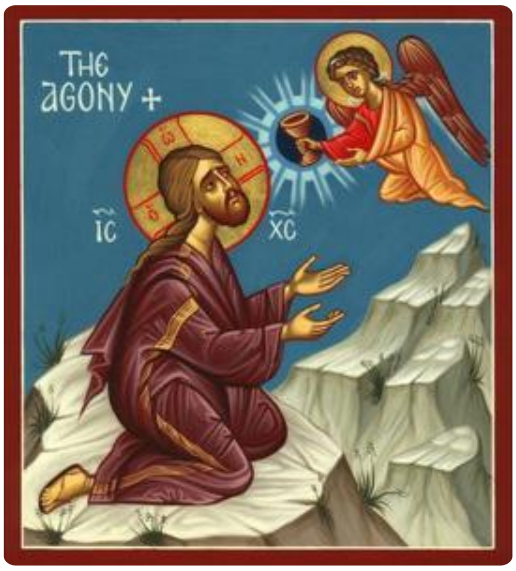


II. The Quadragesimal Lenten Prayers and the theme of Reconciliation.

The quadragesimal Lenten prayers have a special emphasis on the need of love, mutual reconciliation and care for the poor. The following citations may be self-explanatory:

- "As it is written, God is pleased in purely observed fasting, good deeds and acts of charity" (Monday Night, 3rd hour, 1st qolo).
- "Loving one another is the acceptable fasting as told by the Prophet through the Holy Spirit" (Monday Morning, 1st Enyono, Sixth stanza)
- "Fasting is good. But if anybody fasts without love, his fasting has no merit. Prayer is upheld by love, without which its wings are weak and unable to reach the Most High." (Monday morning, Bousa, 3rd stanza).
- "Blessed is the one who observes the feast with purity and shares his bread with the needy. He will receive the reward from the Lord and inherit salvation" (Monday 9th hour, Qolo, 1st stanza).
- "The Prophet declares and exhorts: behold this is the sacred Fast and these are its statutes. Untie the unjust bonds from heart; cut away the deceiving knots from mind; share your bread among the poor and give shelter to the aliens" (Tuesday evening, 1st stanza)
- "Refraining from food and drinks is considered superficial fasting. If it includes charity, it is great before the Lord. The fasting of the one who gives to the poor will be greatly rewarded and accepted. Even if there is nothing to give, when love is united with fasting, that will enable to join with the spiritual community of saints and will make eligible for the chamber of resurrection." (Tuesday Morning, 1st Qolo, 2nd stanza)
- "To use or not the food and water given by God for the sustenance of body will not be the great thing. Doing away evil is the fasting pleasing to God." (Tuesday Morning, 2nd Qolo, 2nd stanza)
- "My brethren! Loving one another is the fullness of commandments. But there are people full of revenge and deceit while observing fasting from food. There are also people who refrain from drinks and murder the brother in secret." (Tuesday 3rd hour, Qolos, 1st stanza)
- "If one leaves this world sowing good deeds of charity, he will be blessed when the resurrection takes place at the harvest. Acts of charity, fasting, vigil and wise hard work will welcome the Messiah. He will come and bestow the blessings unheard on them". (Wednesday Evening, 1st Qolo, 2nd stanza)
- "Isaiah has sung and declared in his prophecy: Behold this is the fasting pleasing to the Lord. He who gives from his bread to the hungry and suffering and provides clothing to poor will never be troubled. He will be like the tree planted by the side of water and having leaves in all seasons" (Wednesday Evening, 2nd Qolo, 1st stanza)
- "When you fast, be careful not to despise your brother; otherwise, the foul smell of your fast will be unbearable to the Lord. Try not to retort the evil done to you, otherwise your fast will be unacceptable with its bad smell" (Wednesday Night Bouzo, second stanza)

- "Blessed is the one who observes fasting with love. He will enjoy with the spiritual ones in eternal life. The beauty of the one who has given charitable gifts, is great. He will become like the spiritual ones and will have their company. He praises the Lord inheriting the life, the Kingdom and the eternal blessings". (Wednesday Morning, 2nd Qolos, 2nd stanza)
- "Why do you fast if you are not kind towards your neighbors? The divinely chosen fasting is full of merciful deeds. You rich one! Your savings in this world should be merciful act. You poor one! Be careful not to grumble against the helping hands!" (Wednesday Morning Bouza, 2nd stanza)



- "It is a common duty to show kindness to the fellow creatures. The rich one is the steward to use his resources to his friends and if he does not do that, he will be punished by the just judgement" (Wednesday Morning, Bouza, 3rd stanza)
- "If gold and silver had mouth they would have told the ones who amass them, as follows: Don't approach me. You have robbed me from the orphans, the widows and from the land of the poor. Woe to you! When death comes to you, you will disappear and I will remain here. Judgement and unquenchable fire await you afterwards." (Thursday Morning, 3rd Qolo, 2nd stanza)
- "Bring your wealth and heap your treasures. Let it be yours if they can save you from death. But if your wealth cannot save you, what is its use? If they are of no use, why do you go after them?" (Thursday Morning, Bouza 3rd stanza)
- "Fasting is good, vigil is appropriate, prayer and petitions are to be upheld by love. These will reconcile the anger and purify the body and soul. Lord, glory to you for reconciling us through fasting and prayer." (Thursday 6th hour, Qolos, 1st stanza)
- "You who observe fasting should call the poor and give them food. Don't expect them to come to you and ask food, rather you go after him and fill his stomach. Farm-land will not go after the farmers, but the farmers go to the land carrying the seeds. When the poor one knocks at your door for food don't avoid him telling that the Lord will provide food. Such a word will be vain and of no use. But if you say the same word to him after giving him food, that will not be awkward because he already knows who is providing for him more than you. (Thursday, 9th hour, Bouzo, 2nd and 3rd stanzas)
- "The wise one can recognize that the fasting keeps with its blessings and curse. The one who fasts with cheat and quarrel will be cursed and the one who fasts with purity, love and sanctity will be blessed" (Friday Night, Eniyono, 3rd stanza)

<u>Conclusion:</u>

Thus, inner healing and reconciliation in all its aspects constitute the central core of Malankara Orthodox Liturgical life as illustrated by the Lenten Prayers of Nineveh and Quadragesimal Lents. But the question remains: "How much we are true to our prayers and liturgical recitations?"

HOW TO EXPERIENCE AND PROMOTE RECONCILIATION & HEALING TODAY

REV. FR. BIJESH PHILIP, PHD

We heard an interesting conversation about the making of a wall and a bridge during the first Presidential election of Donald Trump (2015). When Mr. Donald Trump announced that if elected, he would make a wall at the Mexican Border of USA, the then Pope Francis as a response made a casual remark, that a Christian is one who builds a bridge and not a wall. While walls separate, bridges unite. Day by day, it is proven that life is interlinked with the whole universe and also all human beings are interconnected. In this sense, peace is a discovery of the basic relationships of all. However, we have to restore the broken bridges and ensure their security. Thus, we have been called to be peacemakers and a community of love. St. Paul reminds us to be ready to "proclaim the gospel of peace" always (Ephesians 6:15).

Families, institutions, churches, religions, nations etc. have boundaries and a certain exclusive nature. These are arrangements for each person's growth and proper fulfillment. By being faithful and committed in such bordered communities, persons or groups are expected to grow towards the perfection of boundless love and borderless relationships. Rootedness is for fruitfulness. Love and peace building are fruits. Unfortunately, due to the blindness of ignorance, we fail to see the connectivity and relationship of all. Through ignorance and aggressive self-seeking behavior, which precipitate injustice, many are becoming bridge destroyers. Consequently, these develop divorces, conflicts, communalism and wars which continue to heighten and strengthen the walls of hatred and violence. It is in this context that we need to unceasingly listen to the call of Jesus Christ, who represented the Eternal Relationship and Ultimate Divine Community and who is the foundation of the whole world. His call is to spread the light of love and peace. It is a call to struggle unceasingly, for reconciliation and peace.

The ministry of reconciliation is a vocation of each Christian and the Church as a whole. St. Paul says, "God has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation..." (2 Corinthians 5:18). Those who are reconciled must facilitate the reconciliation not only with God but also between humans. Jesus Christ himself has taught that being the children of God it is our calling to take initiative for reconciliation and peace in the midst of conflicts (Matthew 5:9, 5:23-26).

There are many ancient Christian fathers who have taught about the call of the Church to reflect the fellowship of the Kingdom of God. The treatise 'On the Unity of the Church' written by the North African bishop Cyprian of Carthage (CE 200-258) is the best example of such a profound teaching. In this, Cyprian writes, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). The Lord is with two or three who pray with one mind, than with a great many who differ, and that more can be obtained by the concordant prayer of a few, than by the discordant supplication of many" (On the Unity of the Church 12). St. Ignatius of Antioch portrays the Church as a choir thus, "In your concord and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung" (Ephesians 4:1). Including Ignatius many of these ancient Christian fathers teach that bishop (episcopos) who is the icon of Christ is the uniting figure in the Church. Each local community is centered around an episcopos. In his letter to the Church in Corith (CE 96), bishop of Rome named Clement repeatedly exhorts to overcome their conflicts and heal their divisions and to witness Christ. Clement unequivocally says, "Your schism has led many astray; it has made many despair; it has made many doubt; and it has distressed us all. .....The Lord's name is being blasphemed because of your stupidity...." (Clement's First Letter 46:9 & 47:7.). He goes on to say, "Love does everything in harmony. By love all God's elect were made perfect. Without love nothing can please God." (First Letter 49:5). Didache, the first Christian writing outside the New Testament writings, teaches reconciliation as an important preparation for Holy Eucharist, "Anyone at variance with his neighbor must not join you, until they are reconciled, lest your sacrifice be defiled." (14:2)

A METHODOLOGY OF PEACE MAKING

IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSES

- *Misunderstanding or miscommunication*: A major threat to harmony and peace is misunderstanding the truth. There are many who misguide others, like the serpent in the story of Eden, to believe fake news and lies. Social media which is a great help to amplify our potential to communicate, is also misused by some to deceive others, to develop hatred towards certain individuals and communities. When truth is twisted or half-truths are presented with some hidden agendas, many common people fail to see the truth and consequently, fear, conflicts and violence can develop. For example, there are attempts to polarize Hindu and Muslim communities, by highlighting the examples of Muslim rulers like Mohammed Ghaznvi, who demolished the Somnath temple in CE 1026. But fanatics will not communicate all the truths regarding such acts. Why did Mohammed Ghaznvi choose to demolish the Somnath temple? While coming from Afghanistan, he passed by many temples, but he destroyed Somnath temple only. In medieval times some temples had enormous wealth. It is said that the Somnath temple had jewels, diamonds, gold and silver worth two hundred crore rupees. Ghaznvi looted the entire wealth and proudly asserted that he demolished the temple in the name of Islam (Ram Puniyani, 'Making of a Nation', Indian Currents 04-10 August, 2008. P 59-61). In the beginning of the New Testament, we see King Herod unleashing atrocities against innocent children, primarily because of a misunderstanding. In family life and community life, quite often relationships are broken and rifts develop due to prejudices and miscommunications.
- *Injustice*: Violation of human dignity, denial of rights of humans and nature, deliberate treacherous communication to fulfill selfish agendas, misuse of religious sentiments to develop hostility, mental and physical harassment etc are examples of injustices which trigger conflicts and violence. Two great epics of India – Mahabharata and Ramayana – depict massive violence and wars due to such injustices. Greed and lust of modern Kauravas and Ravanas also create conflicts and violence, making the lives of the poor, women, children and the environment miserable. Recent films like 'Bahubali II' and 'Masterpiece' also present the same old issues in a different modern way. Acts of injustice are the fruits of passions like greed, jealousy, hatred and unbridled pleasure seeking.
- *Egoism*: Egoism of individuals and communities contribute to develop conflicts and violence. One of the root causes of many family issues and social issues is this ego and unbridled self-centeredness. Fascism, communalism, casteism, etc. are founded on the egoism of certain communities.

ART OF THE RESTORATION OF PEACE

- *Clarifying truth in all senses*: Helping others to see truth which leads to freedom, justice and peace is a great spiritual commitment required from all of us. As St. Paul brilliantly exhorts, love rejoices in truth (I Corinthians 13: 6). So, Christ's commandment of love includes a call and divine vocation to search for truth to expose the crooked twisting of truth. A fact-finding struggle to overcome prejudices and helping the world to know truth is part of our calling to love. Sometimes, an immature act of an individual or a small group, can be interpreted as a stand of a large community to which they belong. On many occasions, due to the aggressive standpoint and dealings of a few people, a community as a whole can be misunderstood as fanatic.

- Restorative Justice: Traditionally, the legal system used to focus on punishment of the culprits and the victims' loss were neglected. However, slowly a shift seems to develop from punitive justice to restorative justice, by which the loss of the victims is compensated to a great extent, paving the way for a just peace and reconciliation. Restorative justice is also significant for healing and reconciliation. Since justice and peace are embracing each other (Psalm 85:10), participation in an ongoing struggle of the poor and the marginalized, will contribute immensely for the harmony of the society. Pleas for justice and equality need to be heeded as a call for peace and progress of all. As severe pain helps us to diagnose a hidden illness and consequent medical interventions like operations for healing, instead of suppressing the cries for justice, an empathetic

listening to them, will be helpful towards the restoration of peace through justice. Appointing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), by the Nelson Mandela Government, was an epoch making event to address the issues and crimes associated with the Apartheid in South Africa. The initiative of the Commission under the chairmanship of Bishop Desmond Tutu, gave the victims of such crimes to ventilate their grief publicly. The persecutors were also given an opportunity within a time frame to confess their guilt and commitment to restorative justice publicly, so that they could receive amnesty. Thus, South Africa made history with a unique attempt for building up the harmony of the blacks and the whites, instead of just punishing the white leaders. Restorative justice emphasizes repairing and healing the harm caused by unjust dealings. It is achieved through a cooperative process that include all stake holders. We can trace out such initiatives for Peace from history, to keep our hopes in the midst of our struggles, bright and burning. Striving for reconciliation is a long process of struggle for justice and healing of hurt feelings and crippled memories.

- *Liberating forgiveness*: Vision of forgiveness which is at the heart of all religious teachings is central to the task of reconciliation and peace making also. Peace is not achieved through the gun of vengeance, but, it comes through the blood vessels of forgiveness. Fear is the breeding ground of thoughts of hate and acts of vengeance. Divine wisdom gives the assurance of the security of being with God, which liberates us from unnecessary fears and anxiety. Usually, vengeance is the predictive response to hatred, depriving us of inner peace and thus, harming one's own soul. That is why the great gurus like Dalai Lama teach 'inner disarmament' for the world peace. Forgiveness is a decisive step towards inner healing , which gives purity and clarity to the inner eyes, to see things properly. According to Jesus, forgiveness to and reconciliation with humans and reconciliation with the transcendent source of life are interconnected. In other words, after receiving the undeserved forgiveness from God, we are expected to give forgiveness to the so called unworthy and undeserved fellow beings. There may be many who ignore Jesus' teaching about reconciliation and love especially with regard to enemies as irrelevant and impossible. Peace activists and theologians like Walter Wink or John Yoder are of the opinion that striking the right cheek means a backhand slap with the right hand, which was an act of insult and a usual way of admonishing inferiors. The advice of Jesus to the humiliated person is not to submit meekly to the insult. Showing the other cheek is to show that you are not insulted or intimidated. (Terrance J. Rynne, Gandhi and Jesus p.128). This is the third way between flight from issues and injustices and fight against evil doers literally suggested by Walter Wink. (Jesus and Non Violence, A Third Way, p. 27 and 28). In other words, this is the nonviolent resistance to evil by overcoming intimidation and insult. So, nonviolent resistance to evil and injustice is a possible option even for the weak and the powerless. Forgiveness and compassion are integrally connected to the commitment to justice and peace.
- *Meeting and Dialogue*: God himself came to meet us in Jesus even when we were sinners. The temptation is to avoid our enemies or those who create troubles. But, absence of meeting and

dialogue can invite wars in different forms. There is a book titled 'Word or War'. Christ teaches us to greet even our enemies. Now we can do it through mobile or facebook. But, when he said this, what he meant is a meeting and greeting. On another occasion he has made it very clear: "If you bring your gift to the altar, and there, remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift." - (Mathew 5: 23, 24). Before meeting God in worship, meeting with the so-called enemies is demanded here. This is a call to reach out to the opponents and the so-called outsiders.

Reaching out to meet and have dialogue beyond the borders of caste, colour and creed, age, family by overcoming the fear of the other (Xenophobia) or strangers is also very important. How beautiful it is to reach out to the believers of other religions as friends and neighbors, instead of living in ghettos. Day to day dialogue of common people who belong to various religions, different churches and parishes and also dialogue of different members of a family working together for the common well-being, understanding others as well as sincere dialogue without any ulterior motives, will promote the light of peace, to overcome the darkness spread by misunderstandings . It is worth thinking about developing a ministry for encouraging and coordinating such dialogue, reconciliation and harmony making. There is no need of hiding one's faith commitment in such dialogues. Continuous dialogues without losing hope, will serve to get out of prejudices and misunderstandings, and to progress towards fellowship and peace.

- *Drawing attention to the common identity*: Failure to see common identity, commonalities and common challenges can lead to conflicts, parochialism and consequent issues. Too much focus on and concern for one group or community and least concern for others may lead to fanaticism and communalism. Faithfulness to one's own church, religion or country, needs to be balanced with sincere concern for the wellbeing of the 'others' also. There is a story of a boy making a hole in a boat and when questioned by the adults he reacted that it was none of their business because he was making it just under his seat in the boat. Mankind as a whole, is travelling in this small planet as fellow travelers in a boat, train or plane. In spite of our differences, it is easier to find out a lot of commonalities and common identity for life, especially for mankind, in this huge and incredible universe. Abba (Our Father who art in heaven) consciousness taught by Jesus Christ is very relevant in this connection. The teachings in all ancient spiritual traditions that, the ultimate Mystery is beyond our full comprehension is also affirming this common uniting ground of life. Inclusive language and dealings will generate a sense of equality and being loved, which will result in promoting peace.
- *Popularizing the stories of Peace*: Quite often the stories published in our print media or social media are incidents of conflicts and violence. Those who are committed to peace will take initiative to find out stories of peace and harmony making, from real life, fiction or film and popularize them. Peace stories from the lives of great Quakers like William Penn, mystics like Jalaludin Rumi, visionaries like Vivekananda, Gandhiji, saints like Mother Theresa and Pampady Thirumeni, thinkers like Paulos Mar Gregorios, Amartya Sen, peace activists like John Howard Yoder, Ram Punyani and reconciliation stories like the fall of German wall in 1989, other stories from various communities and institutions and lives of common people will enrich and encourage the peace making process. Slowly, each individual, institution and community will be able to share a story of reconciliation, forgiveness and restorative justice and peace.

INSPIRATIONS FOR PEACEMAKING

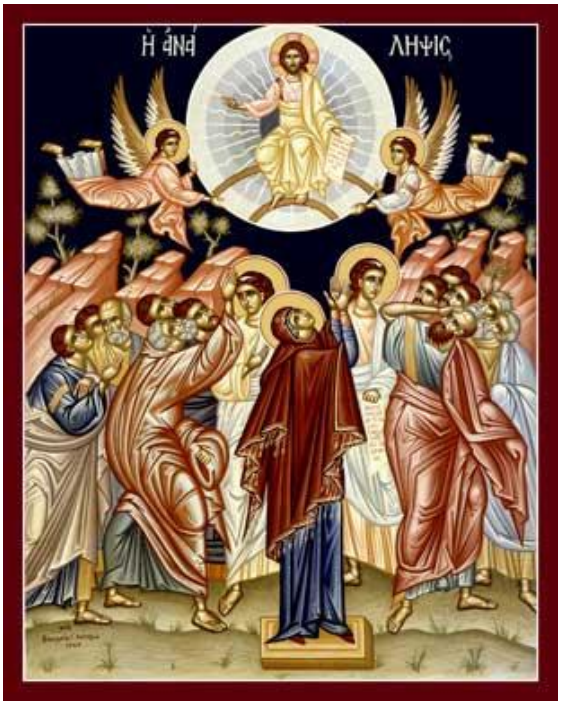
Experience of the pain of conflicts/violence: King Ashoka, after the Kalinga War, saw the sufferings and the destruction it brought to lakhs of people. Direct experience of it changed his heart.

All great movements of history, secular or spiritual, almost all institutional as well as individual initiatives for making a difference in the society, a good number of fiction and films, have been born as a response to such experiences of pain and violence. It must be noted that U.N was formed in the middle of 20th century after the world witnessed two horrible world wars in the first half of that century. What our world needs today is more sane personalities, thinkers and activists who are really sensitive to the miseries of people and rest of the creation.

Search for Divine Wisdom: Collecting maximum information in this age of information revolution is not a big deal. Even if humans succeed in this, they may not surpass some good servers or the artificial intelligence. But, attempts to understand the ancient divine wisdom in the pages of religious scriptures will contribute to our humanization and to the building up of a just and peaceful society. A sincere reading and reflection of the scriptures will promote compassion, truthfulness, healing and peace. Jesus came to give life in its fullness by restoring our relationship with God, our fellow

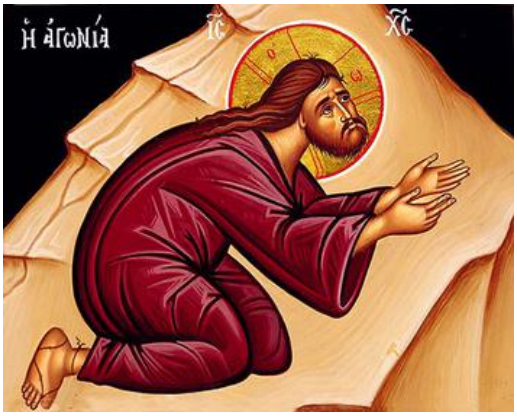
human beings and the rest of the creation. It is high time we understand the secrets and insights of such an abundant life of peace, so that we could build life and our world on such solid foundations instead of shaky, illusionary foundations popularized by the modern consumerist culture. True wisdom will promote love, justice, reconciliation and peace and so it is desirable to make use of such wisdom from major religious scriptures. A few such insightful passages from the Bible are, Isaiah 11: 6-9, Lord's Prayer; St. Matthew 5:1-12, St.Matthew 5: 23, 24, St. John 13: 34, 35 & 15: 10-14, I Corinthians 13, Philippians 2: 1-11, I John 4: 7- 20 , Ephesians 2:1-22, Galatians 5, Romans 14: 10, 12; 14:15, 17; 15:5. Likewise, a reflection on relevant insights from the Liturgy, ancient Christian writers and modern interpreters of faith are also significant.

Inspiration of the Spirit for the Kingdom of Peace: Our striving to restore peace is in fact our participation in the Divine initiative for reconciliation and harmony. God is trying to renew everything unceasingly and give life in its abundance. One of Jesus' mission statement was that He came to give life abundantly. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers and make us perfect and fruitful in spreading the joy and peace of the Gospel (Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:22). St. Paul exhorts us that "to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). Such an abundant life is not material abundance, as the corporate world and the consumerist culture today try to make us belief. It is the joy of relationships, freedom from the personal and social evil, freedom to love and support the weak, the marginalized, the suffering and even enemies and it is the joy of being with God. That is why St. Paul teaches that "the kingdom of God is not food and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).



INNERPEACE AND SOCIAL PEACE

Inner disturbance of individuals can disturb the peace of society or communities and inner peace can contribute towards social peace. Spiritual vision gives us guidance to overcome dehumanizing passions and enjoy communion with God. Jesus taught us to love God with our whole heart, spirit and mind because this is the secret of inner peace. There is a higher self in all of us which is in search of happiness in union with God, the ultimate source of life. Failure to fulfill this inner longing and worship can force us to have communion with many other stuff, which will keep us always in discontentment, causing us to be agents of unnecessary conflicts and disharmony. Genuine repentance and inner healing and purification will enhance our ability to enjoy true communion, leading us to be agents of reconciliation and peace. Unceasing inner spiritual struggle against passions like greed, lust, hatred, jealousy etc is also essential for inner peace. Help of the Lord God is available to those who seek help in this struggle. Those who fail to take this spiritual fight and the goal of our inner thirst seriously and sincerely, may be tempted to fight more against people literally.



CONCLUSION

Sometimes conflicts serve as alarms to wake us up to the light of love, healing, reconciliation and peace. Restoration of bridges to make our world a community of communities is a task as well as a gift. This is a task we accomplish with the eternal Triune Community. Church's striving to be an ideal community, an icon of the Kingdom of God, and an agent of reconciliation and harmony will be a beacon of hope for the world. Unseen struggle for inner disarmament and communion with God ensures inner peace which is extremely important for the world peace. Only through forgiveness and our commitment to justice can we progress towards lasting peace. This is a third way between the role of passive spectators and aggressive attackers. No peace without cross. No reconciliation without dialogue. No peace without justice. No harmony without love and forgiveness.

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

REV. FR. BABY VARGHESE, PHD

The word "confession" means to confess faith or sins. The Syriac word Maudyonutho also has the same meaning. The Greek word is exomologesis which denotes the process of penitence and confession of sins. In English, the words Penitence or Penance or Repentance fully reflect the meaning of the rite. The Malayalam word Kumbasaram derives from the Portuguese word confessor: to confess. Sacrament of Reconciliation is the name used in the ancient Galasian Sacramentary of the Roman Catholic Church. Sacrament of Confession implies reconciliation with God as well as with others. It is the rite of repentance, turning towards God.

Penitential Rites in the Old Testament:

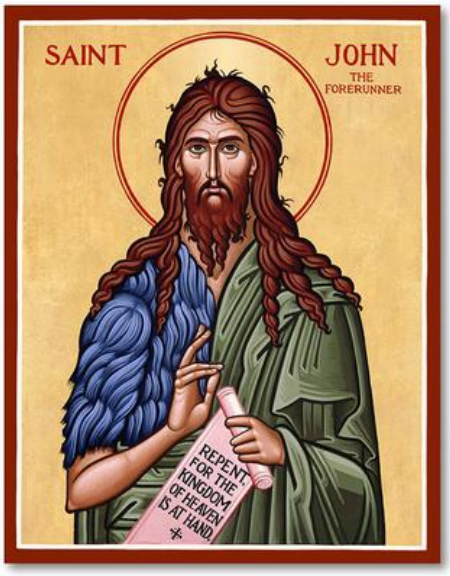
In the Old Testament, we have examples of penance of the community, which included certain rites. (They had "Sacramental character").

- Joshua 7:6-9: Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the Ark of the Lord. He and the elders put dust upon their heads. These are gestures of humiliation; 1 Sam 7:5-9: Fasting was followed by confession of sins. "we have sinned against the Lord"; 2 Chr. 20: 3-13: King Jehoshaphat makes confession of sins.; Often penitence was followed by the offering of a sacrifice. ("Sin offering")
- *Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)*: The rites of Yom Kippur are described in Lev. Ch. 16; cfr. 23:27-32. The High Priest confessed "all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all *their sins"*(Lev. 16:21). A Scapegoat was sent into the wilderness which bore the sins.
- *Ritual Purifications*: They made a Jew pure or apt for worship. Leprosy, Dead body, blood, sexual uncleanness made a Jew impure. Ex. 30:19-21; Lev. 22:4-6; Deut 23: 10-12. Use of Holy Water: Num. 19:17-22. Proselyte baptism of the post Exilic Judaism was an adaptation of the ritual purification. Its purpose was to purify the gentile from the world of sin and to make him member of the people of God.

- *Penitential Rites in the Synagogues*: The sinners were excommunicated from the Synagogues for 30 days. They spent these days in mourning. They were prohibited from participating in any public functions., or from eating with anybody, other than family members, like wife or children. Talmud gives a list of 24 faults which could merit excommunication. The excommunicated member should convince the Synagogue officials of the genuineness of his repentance. Otherwise the excommunication was again extended once or twice each time 30 days. There was also the system of definite excommunication from the Synagogue and also from the society of the believers. (cfr. Luke 6:22; John 9:22; 16:2 etc refer to this practice).
- *Inter-Testamental Period and the Baptist Movement*: During the Inter-Testamental Period, a good number of Jews were aware of their sins and felt the need for more moral purity. The members of the Qumran Community called themselves "penitents" and "the converts of Israel". It was in this context that John the Baptist preached: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Math. 3:2); "Bear fruit that befits repentance" (Math. 3:8). Christ also preached the same message: ""Repent, the Kingdom of God is at

hand!" (Math. 4:17; cfr.Mk. 1:15). When the disciples were sent two by two, "they preached that men should repent" (Mark 6:12). Repentance is the sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God. It is the condition to enter the Kingdom of God.

Son of God and the Remission of Sins:



John the Baptist witnessed to Christ as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1: 29). Unlike the Prophets and John the Baptist, Christ claimed that He had the authority to forgive the sins. He said to the paralytic, "Take heart my son, your sins are forgiven". (Math. 9:2). Christ gave the same authority to His disciples: "And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal every disease and every infirmity" (Math. 10:1; Cfr. Math. 10: 7-8). He gave them also the authority to forgive sins:

- Math 16: 17-19: "...whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven..."(to Peter)
- Math 18:17-18; (to the Twelve)
- John 20:19-23: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. If you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (to the group of ten, excluding St Thomas)

The same authority of Christ was given to the apostles. The expression "to bind" or "to loose" (Math. 16: 17-18; 187:18) is a rabbinic language, which means to declare that something is permitted or prohibited on the basis of the law. It means to excommunicate from the community and to reconcile somebody.

Confession of Sins and Forgiveness in the Apostolic Church

In the Apostolic Church, there were divisions and strife as well as rebels, and people lived in immorality (2 Cor. 12: 20-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" (1 Cor. 6:9). Paul exhorted the Corinthians to repent (2 Cor. 7: 8-11). He asked Timothy to rebuke publicly the sinners: "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear" (I Tim. 5:20). The member of the Church has a responsibility to correct those commit offenses. (Gal. 6:1). However, those who refused to repent, were excommunicated.

- 2 Thess 3:14-15 : "If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother".

Those who repented were reconciled.

- 2 Cor. 2:5-11: A man who caused pain to Paul was reconciled

Probably sins were forgiven and reconciliation was done by laying on of hands.

- "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate I another man's sins; keep yourself pure " (1 Tim. 5:22). Probably Paul here speaks of the forgiveness of sins (cfr. 1 Tim 5:19-21).

Those who refused to repent and to be reconciled, were excommunicated. This is referred to as "delivering to Satan".

- Paul speaks of a man lived an immoral life in Corinth . (1 Cor. 5:1-5). He was excommunicated by the community when it was assembled: " When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cr. 5:4-5). He was excommunicated to give an opportunity to repent.
- Similarly, "Hymaneus and Alexander were delivered to Satan (by Paul) that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20).
- What does this expression mean? In baptism, a person was delivered from the servitude to Satan. But when he sins again and continues in it, he is excommunicated. Thus, he again becomes slave to Satan.

In the Early Church:

Didache (c.100) attests the custom of confessing the sis. But is it not clear whether sins were publicly confessed.

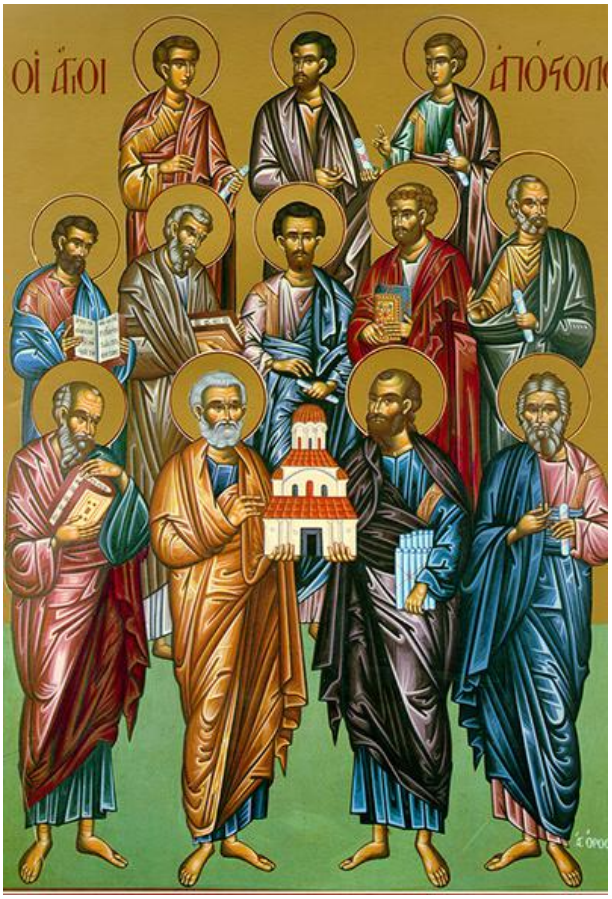
- 4:14: "In the Church, confess your faults, and do not come to your prayers with a bad conscience"
- 14:1: "Assemble on the Lord's day. And break bread and offer the Eucharist; but first make confession of your faults so that your sacrifice may be a pure one"
- 15:3: "Reprove one another, but peacefully and not in hot blood, as you are told in the Gospel. But have no converse with anyone who has done his neighbor an injury; let that man not hear a single word from you until he repents"

The penitential customs were not uniform in the early Church. In the first and second centuries, some Churches adopted very strict position in the case of the reconciliation of the sinners. Some held that there is no forgiveness for the sins committed after baptism. The heretics like Montanists and Novatians followed this attitude. Shepherd of Hermas refers to the custom of permitting only one repentance after baptism. Probably it was in this context that penance was called "second baptism" by Clement of Alexandria (180-200). But the authentic tradition never took an intransigent attitude towards sins committed after baptism. However, the Church excommunicated for a certain time those who have committed sins such as adultery, apostasy and murder. After a period of penance, which lasted for one to three or more years, the penitents were publicly reconciled with the laying on of hands by the bishop. For simple sins, no penance was imposed.

The bishop learns of the sins, either through a rumour or through the denunciation by someone. The bishop takes initiative to impose penitence, sometimes forcefully. Sometimes the sinner admits his faults and asks for penitence. However, confession of sins was most probably done secretly. But the penance was done publicly. In 5th century Rome, some made an attempt to introduce public confession of sins. But Pope Leo I (d. 461) forbade this practice saying that it is against the law of the apostles.

In Antioch and Constantinople, there existed a "priest penitentiary" who was in charge of the penitents. The bishop decided the period of penitence. Penitent had to observe, long fasting, vigil and alms giving. After the liturgy of the word, penitents were dismissed along with the catechumens and energumens (or Possessed).

In some Churches, the penitents had to undergo various stages. Gregory the Wonder worker (Gregory Thaumaturgus, Canonical Epistle 11) attests the existence of various stages in Asia Minor: (1) Mourners, (2) Hearers, (3)Fallers or Penitents and (4) Bystanders.



Mourners stood outside the Church. Hearers were allowed to enter the church and hear the reading of the scriptures and the sermon. Before the beginning of the anaphora, both were dismissed without the laying of hands. Penitents were dismissed with the laying of hands by the bishop. Bystanders were permitted to remain for the celebration of the Eucharist, but they were not given communion.

When the penitence is over, they were reconciled. In the presence of the whole community with a special liturgy, which included prostrations, exhortations, prayers and laying on of hands by the bishop. In Rome the reconciliation was held on Maundy Thursday. In Milan and Spain, it was held on Good Friday. But in the case of the dying penitents, reconciliation was given at any moment. There were some post-penitential disciple. The penitents were never ordained. In some places, married penitents were asked to leave the family and to join a monastery.

Sacramentality of Penitence

- Fathers compared it to baptism. Thus, Tertullian called penance "second baptism".
- Some fathers taught that Holy Spirit received at baptism is lost because of serious sins. The same Spirit is received in reconciliation. So, confession means renewal of the baptismal grace.
- Role of the community: Penance was not an individual affair. The whole community was involved it. Community helped the penitent to

return and to be reconciled. According to Origen, the Church of the saints bears the sins of its members. The reconciliation was held before the community.

- Theologians compare penance with the Anointing of the Sick, which is a rite of repentance and recovery of spiritual as well as physical health. Penance is a rite of spiritual healing. Likewise, monasticism is a life of repentance. Thus in the West, if a penitent enters a monastery, he was immediately given absolution and communion. Monastic life was considered as second baptism, which purifies even the most serious sins.

Private Confession or Auricular Confession:

In the sixth century, people began to hesitate to accept public penance. Most of them postponed it till death. In many western churches, penitence became a sacrament of a dying member.

Since the time of the desert fathers, confession was part of the monastic discipline. Monks confessed mutually or before the head of a monastery. A monk used to open his heart before an elder who has diacrisis or the gift of discernment. The elder, who was not always a priest, gave spiritual directions also. St Pachomius (+ 346), founder of cenobitic monasticism, recommended this type of confession. St Basil (+ 379) refers to this practice as part of the monastic rules. It was widely followed among the eastern monks and gradually passed on to the West. Several leading figures of Western monasticism had their training in Egypt. The best example is Cassian, founder of Western monasticism. St Benedict (+ 547) included it in his monastic rules.

We have documents on the origin of private confession in the West. The Celtic Church of the British Islands was founded in the 4th/5th centuries. A strong monasticism developed there till 12th century. In the organization of the Celtic Church, the bishop played little role. Abbot priests exercised jurisdiction over vast territory. The pastoral duties were fulfilled by monk priests, who popularized private confession among the lay people.

Confession in the Orthodox Church

Most probably private confession was popularized among the laypeople by the monks, as the priests usually received training in monasteries. [Nomocanon of Bar Hebraeus does not speak of private confession].

The aim of the confession is to restore in the penitent the trust in divine love and forgiveness and to reconcile him to the community he has harmed by his evil. It is not easy for the individual to estimate the gravity of his behavior. Often he judges his serious offences lightly and finds excuses for his actions. Confession aims at helping a Christian to achieve a more balanced evaluation of his action.

In the West, the priest occupies the seat of judgment and the penitent kneels beside him when he confesses his sins. In the Byzantine Church, the penitent stands in front of a small desk on which the Book of the Gospels and the Cross are placed. The priest does not sit, but stands by his side, because he is not a judge, but a physician helping the penitent to recover his spiritual health. In the East, most confessors have their own way of approaching it. Some ask questions to facilitate self disclosure. Others refrain from questions.

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS IN HEALING

REV. FR. SHAJI P. JOHN

Forgiveness is often regarded as an essential virtue, yet its power extends far beyond a mere moral obligation. It is a profound force capable of healing wounds, restoring relationships, and fostering community peace. From personal conflicts to deep-rooted societal divisions, forgiveness plays a crucial role in reconciliation and renewal. Rooted in Christian teachings, forgiveness is not just an emotional act but a spiritual and transformative journey that leads individuals and communities toward healing. This article explores the power of forgiveness and its ability to bring about personal and communal restoration.

Biblical Perspectives on Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a central theme in the Bible, woven throughout both the Old and New Testaments. It is a divine act that reflects God's mercy and love for humanity. Through forgiveness, individuals experience healing, reconciliation, and a restored relationship with God and others. The biblical teachings on forgiveness emphasize its necessity, demonstrating that it is not merely a moral virtue but a command that brings spiritual transformation.

The Old Testament presents forgiveness as both a divine characteristic and a necessary human practice. The Hebrew term for forgiveness, "*salach*," is frequently associated with God's mercy toward His people. God's nature is inherently forgiving, as seen in passages such as Exodus 34:6-7, where He reveals Himself as "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness." Despite Israel's repeated disobedience, God continually extended forgiveness when they repented. The sacrificial system established in Leviticus provided a way for sinners to seek atonement, illustrating that forgiveness comes at a cost. The Old Testament also encourages individuals to practice forgiveness. Genesis 50:20-21 portrays Joseph's extraordinary act of forgiveness toward his brothers who had betrayed him. Instead of seeking vengeance, he recognised God's greater plan and chose reconciliation. Similarly, Psalm 32 highlights the joy of being forgiven by God, affirming that divine mercy leads to renewal.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ embodies perfect forgiveness, teaching and demonstrating it through His life, ministry, and sacrificial death. Jesus emphasised forgiveness as an essential aspect of Christian living. His teachings include:

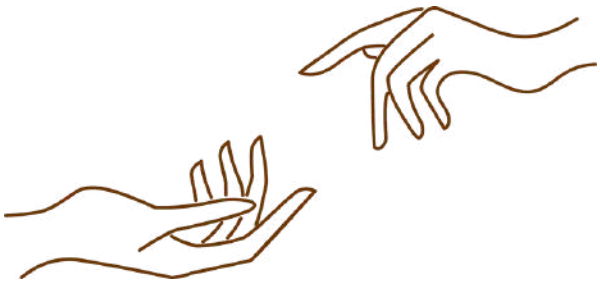
- Matthew 6:14-15 – "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."
- Matthew 18:21-22 – When Peter asked how many times he should forgive, Jesus responded, "Seventy times seven," illustrating the boundless nature of forgiveness.
- The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:12) – "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," showing the link between receiving and extending forgiveness.

Jesus not only preached forgiveness but lived it. His interactions with sinners, including the adulterous woman (John 8:1-11) and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), demonstrated His willingness to restore those who sought mercy. The ultimate act of divine forgiveness occurred on the cross, where He prayed, "Father,

forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Forgiveness is not merely an act of mercy; it is transformative. When individuals forgive, they experience healing, freedom, and restored relationships. Unforgiveness breeds resentment and emotional pain. However, Scripture encourages believers to release bitterness and embrace peace. Ephesians 4:31-32 commands, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Forgiveness fosters reconciliation, bringing unity within families, churches, and communities. Colossians 3:13 urges, "Bear with each other and forgive one another... Forgive as the Lord forgave you." This practice nurtures harmony and reflects God's love. Forgiving others is a testimony of Christ's love. When believers forgive, they mirror God's grace and inspire others to seek reconciliation. The early Christians, despite persecution, forgave their oppressors, demonstrating unwavering faith.

The Healing Power of Forgiveness in Personal Life

At the heart of every wounded relationship lies pain – pain caused by betrayal, misunderstandings, or unresolved grievances. This emotional burden, if left unaddressed, can lead to prolonged distress, affecting one's mental and physical well-being. However, forgiveness serves as a bridge that allows individuals to overcome this pain, offering profound healing and renewal. By choosing forgiveness, one not only liberates oneself from emotional turmoil but also fosters deeper, more meaningful relationships built on compassion and understanding.



Scientific studies affirm that forgiveness plays a crucial role in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. When individuals hold onto resentment, their bodies remain in a constant state of tension, leading to adverse effects on mental health. Anger and bitterness can trigger prolonged stress responses, weakening the immune system and increasing vulnerability to conditions such as hypertension and heart disease. However, embracing forgiveness promotes emotional resilience, allowing individuals to process their pain constructively. By releasing negative emotions, one experiences a renewed sense of peace, clarity, and emotional balance. Forgiveness also fosters self-awareness and emotional maturity. It encourages individuals to view conflicts with empathy, understanding that human imperfection often leads to mistakes. When individuals cultivate a forgiving mindset, they shift from dwelling on past hurts to embracing the present with optimism and hope. This transformation creates a more harmonious emotional state, strengthening personal growth and overall happiness.

Unforgiveness, when harbored over time, acts as an invisible toxin that corrodes relationships and inner peace. Holding onto grudges traps individuals in a cycle of negativity, preventing emotional healing. It fuels resentment, deepening wounds rather than allowing them to heal. Psychologists have found that persistent anger and bitterness contribute to anxiety disorders, sleep disturbances, and even cognitive impairments. Beyond personal distress, unforgiveness impacts interpersonal relationships. When individuals refuse to let go of past hurts, it fosters division, leading to broken friendships, strained family ties, and workplace conflicts. It creates barriers to open communication and prevents reconciliation. However, choosing to forgive is an empowering act – it is not a sign of weakness but of strength and emotional intelligence. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting; instead, it means acknowledging the pain and deciding not to let it control one's future. True healing begins when individuals actively choose to let go of anger and resentment. This decision requires conscious effort, patience, and self-reflection.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Families and Communities

Families are the foundational units of society, built on love, trust, and shared experiences. However, they are not immune to conflicts, whether due to generational differences, personal grievances, or misunderstandings. Small disputes can escalate into long-standing resentments, causing emotional distress and division. In such situations, forgiveness becomes essential in healing wounds and preserving the integrity of family ties.

When individuals choose to forgive, they release negative emotions that might otherwise fester and create distance. Parents forgiving their children for past mistakes, siblings reconciling after years of misunderstandings, or spouses overcoming hurtful experiences can rebuild family dynamics based on empathy and unconditional love. The act of forgiveness fosters emotional restoration, allowing families to reconnect and support one another through life's challenges.

Beyond individual and familial relationships, forgiveness plays a vital role in healing communities. Societies are often marked by conflicts stemming from political,

social, or cultural differences. Divisions within communities can lead to hostility, discrimination, and estrangement. However, embracing forgiveness can break cycles of resentment and promote peace. Throughout history, nations and societies have faced crises that tested their ability to forgive and reconcile. Post-conflict societies, such as those recovering from war or social injustices, have relied on forgiveness as a means of healing and rebuilding unity.

The Role of the Church in Promoting Forgiveness

The Church plays a vital role in fostering forgiveness and reconciliation, serving as a guiding force for individuals, families, and communities seeking healing. Through pastoral care, spiritual guidance, and community support, the Church provides a safe space where people can find solace, restoration, and renewed relationships. By promoting forgiveness, the Church not only strengthens personal faith but also cultivates unity and peace within society.

One of the Church's primary responsibilities is to offer pastoral care that encourages forgiveness. Clergy members, counselors, and spiritual leaders provide guidance to individuals struggling with resentment, betrayal, or emotional wounds. Through sermons, Bible studies, and personal counselling, the Church helps believers understand the transformative power of forgiveness. Many churches organize retreats and workshops focused on healing, allowing individuals to reflect on their experiences and embrace the grace of reconciliation.

Beyond individual healing, the Church plays a crucial role in promoting reconciliation within families and communities. Many conflicts arise due to misunderstandings, generational wounds, and social divisions. The Church acts as a mediator, facilitating dialogue and encouraging peaceful resolutions. Ministries dedicated to reconciliation work tirelessly to mend broken relationships, offering counselling and support to those affected by disputes.

Church-led initiatives, such as reconciliation programs and interfaith dialogues, create opportunities for healing. By organizing community gatherings, prayer meetings, and outreach programs, churches bring people together, fostering unity and mutual respect. These efforts help individuals overcome past grievances and rebuild trust, ensuring that forgiveness leads to lasting peace. Testimonies of forgiveness and redemption serve as powerful tools in inspiring others to embrace reconciliation. Churches often share stories of individuals who have experienced profound healing through forgiveness, demonstrating the impact of grace in real-life situations. Whether through sermons, publications, or personal testimonies, these narratives encourage believers to follow Christ's example. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) is a biblical illustration of forgiveness and reconciliation. The father's unconditional love and acceptance of his wayward son reflect God's boundless mercy. By highlighting such stories, the Church reinforces the message that forgiveness is not only possible but essential for spiritual growth and communal harmony.

Conclusion

The Church's role in promoting forgiveness extends beyond individual relationships – it is a mission that transforms lives and strengthens communities. Through pastoral care, reconciliation efforts, and the sharing of grace-filled testimonies, the Church fosters an environment where healing and unity thrive. By embodying Christ's teachings, believers are encouraged to practice forgiveness, ensuring that love and compassion prevail over resentment and division. In a world often marked by conflict, the Church stands as a beacon of hope, guiding individuals toward the path of reconciliation and peace.

"ONE SOWS, ANOTHER REAPS" : A HUMBLE , GRATEFUL AND CREATIVE APPROACH TO OUR LEGACY

REV. FR. K. M. GEORGE, PHD

"If I have seen farther (than others), it is by standing on the shoulders of giants", so wrote Isaac Newton in a letter to his contemporary the English polymath Robert Hooke in 1676. Newton was, in fact, using an old Latin metaphorical phrase about the work and contributions of people before us on the basis of which we create new ideas and make new inventions. This is true even today in all areas of theoretical and practical knowledge, including new scientific theories and technological inventions that are very useful for our daily life. We don't create anything out of nothing, but build and invent new things out of the rich resources of generations of human beings who lived and labored before our time.

An interesting book edited by Stephen Hawking, the legendary theoretical physicist who died in 2018, is titled 'On the Shoulders of Giants: the Great Works of Physics and Astronomy'(2002). In the introduction to the book Stephen Hawking observes: "May be Newton should have said, 'I used the shoulders of giants as a spring board'". Jesus, in a conversation with his disciples, quoted a similar saying: "one sows and another reaps". Then he continued: "I send you to reap that for which you did not labor. They have labored and you have entered into their labor" (John 4:37-38). These sayings from different ages and places are both materially and physically true. For all the benefits of technology that we use today, like for example, electricity and it's myriads of applications, means of transportation and communication, modern gadgets and devices like our smartphones, we are indebted to the hard labor of our forebearers. From food, clothing and housing to art, culture, and civilization we have used our imagination and creativity to build on the foundations laid by our forefathers and mothers. This is true of the spiritual culture as well. Most people who are spiritually sensitive and fruitful have received their spiritual and ethical sensibility from their parents and their socio-religious backgrounds.

A proper awareness of our legacy requires us to be sensitive to three very important elements.

1. Gratitude

We need to constantly remind ourselves that our very existence and whatever we contribute to society owe a lot to a long tradition of our ancestors from the very beginning of the human race. People have laboured to nourish their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. They have passed on to us their knowledge of the environment, their skills, their understanding of the reality of the world, their artistic and literary talents. In religious terms, this is what is called tradition in a broadly positive sense. So we inherit a tradition as if it were a flowing river, ever moving, and ever maintaining the unbroken connection between the source and the destination. So to be part of the tradition means to be grateful for what we are and all that we aspire to. In contemporary urban culture, people tend to be more and more individualistic and forgetful of the deep

interconnection between their selves and the whole tradition in which they "live, move and have their being". People tend to be forgetful of the source and destination of life in this world. In such cases one is likely to be carried away to the chaos of total meaningless. Our religious and spiritual convictions usually help us discern the wisdom regarding our origin and our end. Political and ideological beliefs also help us, but they don't give ultimate meaning to our life. They are there, in a democratic set up, to provide the citizens with necessary means, opportunities and structures to organise their social life and to get for them enough food, shelter, clothing, education and employment in a more or less civilized manner. Political regimes and ideological principles are also passing phenomena. They can change their positions, enter into mutual conflicts, make war , become oppressive to people and also disappear from history. So we need to cultivate and keep a mindset that recognises the ultimate value of mutual care, sharing of resources in a just social order, and maintaining the spirit of the community as one body.

2. Humility

Arrogance is the opposite of humility. An individual can be arrogant, a nation can be arrogant, a professional group can be arrogant, etc. It happens when your individual or collective ego puts itself over everything around you, and makes attempts to control everything. This is a common trait in human beings who acquire wealth and positions in our world. Conflicts of all kind, weather religious, political, national or international, can lead to wars that eventually destroy human culture and civilization. We often speak of humility as a desirable personal trait in individuals. However, nations and national leaders, religions and their heads are required to practice the virtue of humility and its concomitant openness and respect for the other. Cessation of conflicts and wars can be achieved if the political and religious leaders involved in them display with humility some degree of mutual respect, without suspicion of the other. Forgiveness and reconciliation between individuals, as well as between nations can happen if there is a deep sense of humility, honest simplicity and awareness of the whole humanity on the part of religious and political leaders.

3. Creativity

Our deep sense of the legacy of our ancestors handed over to us and our own dependence on the work of others can inspire us to make big forward leaps towards new creative contributions to that continuing legacy. As we reap the harvest of others who had sown, so we too need to sow without desire to reap the harvest by ourselves. Instead, we should have the future generations in mind, and we need to work and consume with utmost responsibility in order to provide a sustainable world for future generations. The present environmental crisis and the imminent threats to the survival of life clearly give us a message: Life on earth may not continue for long if we continue to exploit the limited resources on our planet earth at the current rate, for our own pleasure, and to satisfy our lust and pride. So human creativity now demands that we evolve and invent ways of saving our planet, and not indulge in unlimited and irresponsible freedom of consumption, abuse of the Earth and over exploitation of its resources.

Some Sad Prospects.

It is unlikely that we human beings would voluntarily accept this radical change in our consumerist and profligate lifestyle until a major ecological catastrophe of global magnitude occurs erasing large sections of the human race, and destroying forever some of the great technological accomplishments that we have gained so far. The digital civilization can simply collapse in a dramatic way as a result of the introduction of some very powerful evil virus that some vile human beings might create. The global human population can be reduced to a handful of people by some biological virus, either created by humans or breaking out of the polar ice in the wake of global warming. A huge asteroid can strike our planet Earth and bring to nothing human life and our global civilization. A solar storm from the sun can totally disable our communication network. The earth's orbit around the sun can alter with apocalyptic climate changes. These are all likely possibilities, and not simply sensational speculations.

We are also confronted with a fatal carbon paradox. Life on earth began with carbon as its most essential component in the first molecule of life. Life on earth may end with carbon as life's last enemy unleashed by our own 'carbon civilization'.

But let's hope for the best. We need to reinstate the biblical- eschatological picture of the dramatic end of our world or of our age (aeon) in our perception of the present world reality in order to regain some degree of spiritual and ethical sobriety. We may look for the shoulders of wise spiritual giants in our Tradition from where we could get a truer picture of the uncertain future.

RECONCILIATION AND HEALING IN A DIGITAL AGE

REV. FR. JOHN THOMAS KARINGATTIL, PHD

Reconciliation and healing are central themes in Christian theology, rooted in the redemptive work of God through Christ. These concepts, grounded in Scripture, emphasize the restoration of broken relationships—both with God and among human beings—and the holistic healing of individuals and communities. In the context of the digital age, the possibilities for genuine reconciliation and healing are increasingly challenged. This article explores how digital technologies shape human relationships and interactions, and examines both the promises and perils these technologies pose for the Church's ministry of reconciliation and healing.

1. Reconciliation and Healing

Reconciliation is a profound theological concept that denotes the restoration of broken relationships, especially between humanity and God. The Greek term katallagē (καταλλαγή), used in the New Testament (Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20), signifies a mutual transformation and the reestablishment of peace. It reflects a divine initiative through grace and harmonious relationship.

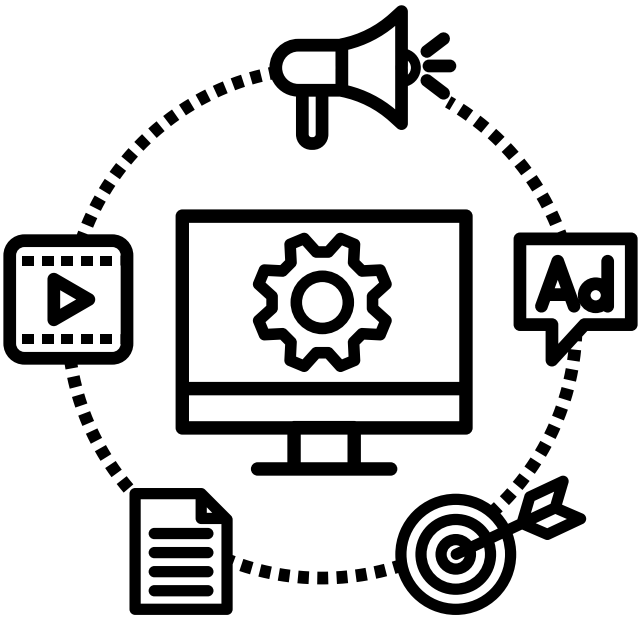
This reconciliation is both vertical—restoring communion with God—and horizontal—mending interpersonal and communal relationships. Healing, in biblical theology, is a complementary theme. It represents God's redemptive presence in the world, revealing divine compassion and covenantal faithfulness. Scripture portrays God as the healer of His people (Exodus 15:26), and the Psalms celebrate God's power to restore body, mind, and soul (Psalm 103:2-3).

> "I am the Lord who heals you."
>
> Exodus 15:26

Together, reconciliation and healing represent the holistic vision of God's salvific work—addressing the brokenness of sin and the wounds it inflicts on creation. The Church, as the Body of Christ, is called to embody this ministry, witnessing to God's wholeness in a broken world.

2. The Digital Age and Human Interactions

In the 21st century, technological advancements have dramatically transformed the landscape of human relationships. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Generative AI (such as ChatGPT and Sora), the Metaverse, Web3, and blockchain technologies are reshaping how people communicate, work, and engage with reality. Tools like digital twins, the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data are integrating virtual and physical realms, while cloud computing and cybersecurity govern the infrastructure of modern life.



These digital innovations offer immense potential for education, healthcare, entertainment, and global connectivity. Yet they also mediate human relationships in ways that may distort, dilute, or even damage the processes of reconciliation and healing.

The digital platforms facilitate instant communication and provide access to information, knowledge, and

but they also present significant challenges to the kind of deep, meaningful interaction that reconciliation and healing require. The following disruptions highlight the ways in which digital spaces can hinder the Church's ministry of reconciliation and healing.

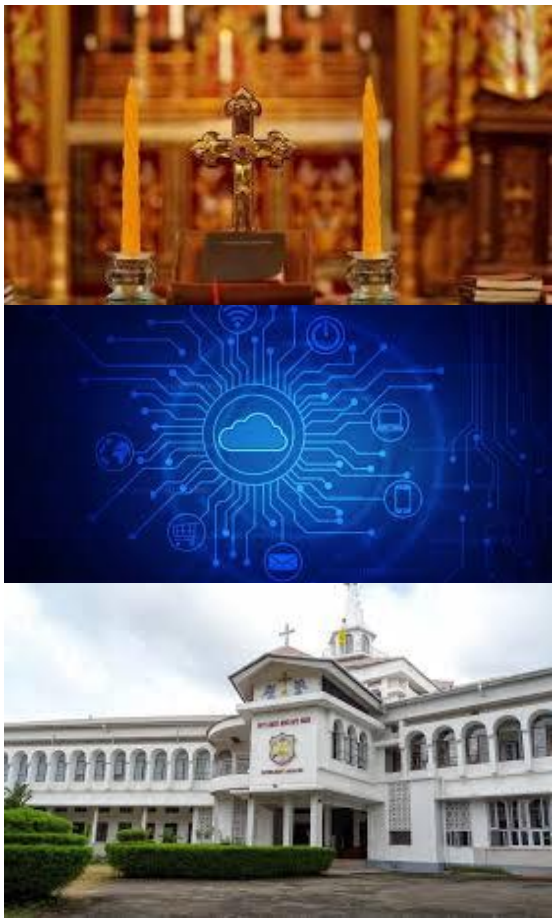
1. Loss of Empathy in Communication: Digital interactions often lack non-verbal cues—facial expressions, tone, body language—that are essential for emotional resonance and genuine understanding. This impairs the depth of communication needed for reconciliation, which often depends on shared vulnerability and empathy.
2. Superficial Engagement: Social media encourages engagement through likes, shares, and brief comments, replacing reflective listening and nuanced dialogue. Such superficial interactions can undermine the trust and attentiveness required for authentic healing.
3. Avoidance of Difficult Conversations: Online communication allows users to curate responses or avoid uncomfortable discussions altogether. This tendency to evade direct confrontation weakens the potential for deep reconciliation, which often emerges through painful but honest dialogue.
4. Escalation of Conflict: Digital algorithms prioritize engagement, often by amplifying sensational or polarizing content. This creates echo chambers, heightens ideological divides, and escalates conflicts, thereby obstructing efforts to build bridges of understanding.
5. Manipulated Truth and the Post-Truth Paradigm: The digital age has enabled the proliferation of misinformation, deepfakes, and selectively edited content, all of which distort shared narratives. In a post-truth culture, where subjective perceptions often override objective facts, the trust essential to reconciliation and healing is severely compromised.

All media outlets are increasingly being accused of promoting false narratives and fabricating news through speculation and imagination. The charge that they have become "factories of lies" is gaining strength. With social media now accessible to everyone, information—true or false—can be disseminated instantly, from anywhere and at any time. We are living in what can be described as the springtime of false propaganda. The digital space is becoming increasingly polluted with deceptive sounds and manipulated images, often blurring the line between truth and falsehood. Although various tools and sources exist to verify facts, the human mind often tends to be more susceptible to sensational and misleading content.

3. The Church's Response in a Digital Age

In an era marked by technological disruption and epistemological uncertainty, the Church must reaffirm its vocation as a community of reconciliation and healing. It must not only adapt to digital technologies but also critically engage them through a theological lens.

The Church is called to uphold the ministry of reconciliation and healing (2 Cor 5:18-19), The Church must nurture spaces (both online and offline) that promote truthfulness, empathy, accountability, and healing. It must also foster digital literacy among its members, enabling them to navigate the complexities of post-truth culture with spiritual wisdom and moral clarity.



Conclusion

In the digital age, where relationships are increasingly mediated by algorithms and shaped by fragmented identities, the Church is called to be a counter-cultural witness to wholeness. As a reconciling and healing community, it must speak the truth in love, embody Christ's compassion, and offer hope to a world wounded by division and distortion. Reconciliation and healing are not optional ministries but foundational to the Church's mission.

(Fr. Dr. John Thomas Karingattil: Principal, Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam)

Let God and Seek Me

By Anonymous

June 2025

Let go and seek me

Let go and seek Me says the Lord
Why are you thinking about something else or someone else when you're supposed to be talking to me asks the Lord
Let go and seek Me *only* says the Lord

How do I let go Lord?
Even when I thought I've forgotten, something deep inside me still gets triggered and it all starts anew again
I want to let go Lord but I keep failing
There is always a reminder of what I'm letting go of, even if time has passed, and I keep falling and failing
Help me Lord, save me from my own misery that I've created
Help me let go and seek you only Lord
I want to, I truly want to seek you

Then the Lord said,
"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"
No Lord, I don't perceive it
My eyes are blind, ears deaf, and heart and mind closed
I do not perceive it Lord
Please Lord, make it evident for me, like crystal clear
Be still and know that I am God
Be still, be patient
Everything will be revealed in its own time says the Lord

Remember, you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you says the Lord
I don't deserve such words from you Lord when I am despicable
I don't deserve your love when I'm not capable of giving you the love you deserve

Oh taste and see that I am good says the Lord

You have burdened me with your sins and have wearied me with your iniquities says the Lord
But I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins
Taste and see that I am good says the Lord
Let go and seek Me says the Lord

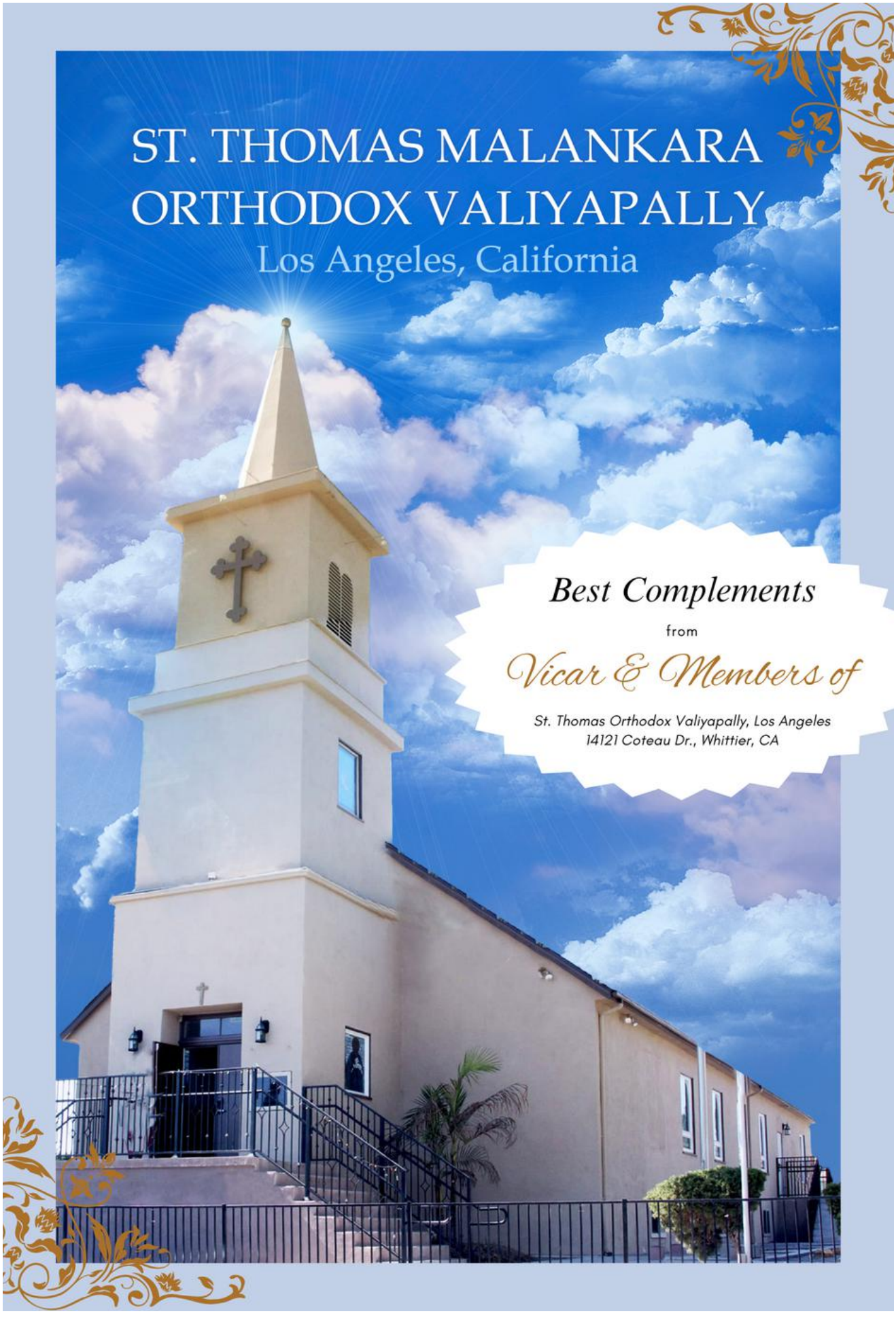
You are truly good Lord
I will let go Lord, be patient with me and help me, have mercy Lord
I will seek you all the days of my life Lord
Who else is there that loves me like you do Lord
I will let go and seek you Lord
For I cannot serve mammon and you Lord and I want to serve only you Lord
Help me Lord, your grace is sufficient for me
Be my strength in my weakness
I know you will provide as you always do

Those who seek the Lord lacks no good thing
I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my troubles

Please keep my mind and heart always in you Lord

Amen

SOUVENIR
WELL-WISHERS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ST. MARY'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

BEST WISHES

The Vicar, Managing Committee, and members of St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church of Southwest Florida offer our prayers and best wishes for a blessed and successful 2025 Family and Youth Conference.

St. Paul's Orthodox Church

McKinney, Texas

A BRIEF HISTORY

Founding Years (2008)

St. Paul's Orthodox Church was formally established on May 6, 2008 by Kalpana No. K51/2006, issued with the blessing of the late H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas, then Metropolitan of the American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Church. Rev. Fr. John K. Vaidyan was appointed the first Vicar, celebrating the Holy Qurbana with the help of Rev. Dr. Regee Mathews and Rev. Fr. John Geevarghese in borrowed worship spaces around Dallas.

Joining the Diocese of Southwest America (2009)

When the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church established the Diocese of Southwest America on April 1, 2009, St. Paul's became one of its first parishes under H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebios. Over the next decade a dedicated line of clergy nurtured steady growth:

- Rev. Fr. K. Y. Wilson
- Rev. Dr. Regee Mathews
- Rev. Fr. Binu Mathews
- Rev. Fr. Mathews George
- Very Rev. V. V. Mathewkutty Cor-Episcopos
- Very Rev. Philip Sankarathil Cor-Episcopos
- Rev. Fr. Thomas Mathew

These priests fostered vibrant Sunday School, youth, and women's and seniors' ministries, prompting the search for a permanent home.

A Permanent Home in McKinney (2023)

In August 2021, Diocesan Assistant Metropolitan H.G. Dr. Zacharias Mar Aprem appointed Very Rev. Raju Daniel Cor-Episcopos as Vicar. Guided by his energetic leadership, the parish purchased a 6.11-acre campus in McKinney, Texas on February 13, 2023. The site included a church building, fellowship hall, and rectory.

On March 25, 2023, the Feast of the Annunciation of our Lord, H.G. Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios temporarily consecrated the sanctuary and celebrated the parish's first Holy Qurbana on its own grounds.

Consecration and Dedication (October 2023)

After extensive renovations and the construction of the Holy Altar, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, consecrated the church on October 6-7, 2023.

Concelebrating hierarchs included:

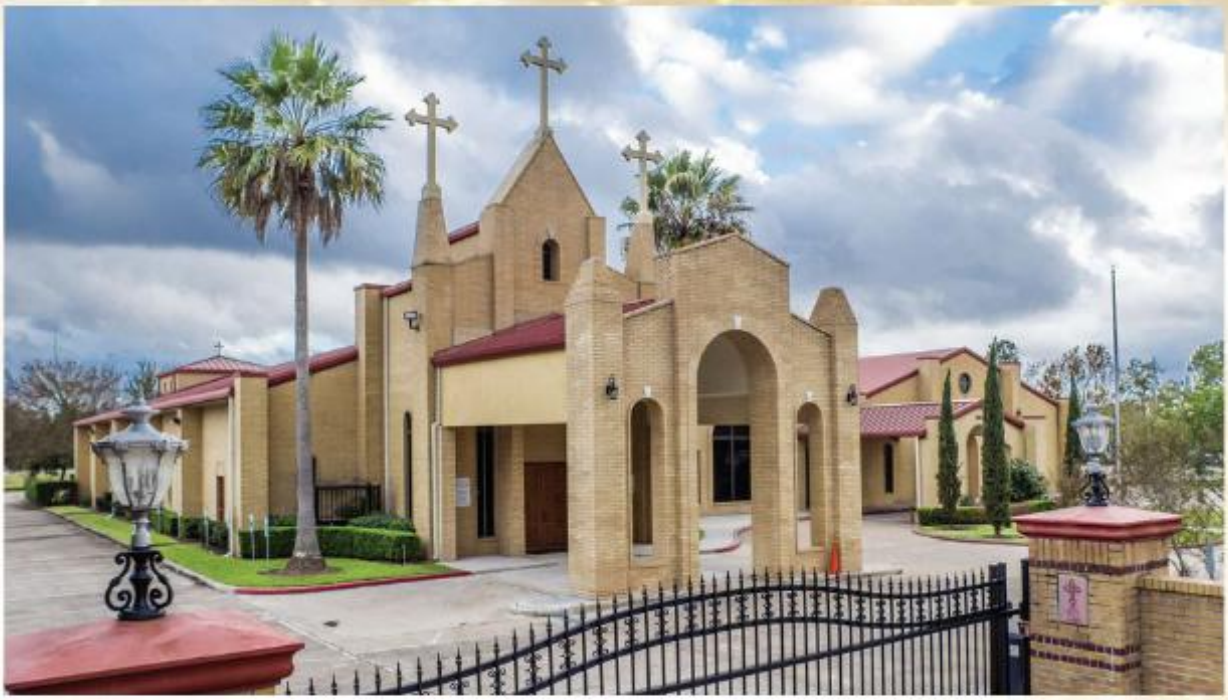
- H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios (DS-WA)
- H.G. Dr. Youhanon Mar Dioscoros (Kottayam)
- H.G. Dr. Joshua Mar Nicodimos (Nilackal)

Clergy and faithful from across America joined local civic leaders for this historic first visit of the Catholicos to North Texas.

Continuing the Mission (2023-present)

Rev. Fr. John Mathew was appointed Assistant Vicar on November 1, 2023, allowing the parish to expand its liturgical schedule and pastoral outreach. Today, St. Paul's conducts Malayalam and English language services every Sunday, offers robust spiritual-education and charitable programs, and serves as a welcoming witness to the ancient faith for the growing communities of North Dallas.

Come and see what the Lord has done,
the amazing things he has done on the earth. Psalms 46:8



St. Thomas Cathedral
Houston

St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church

San Antonio, Texas

VICAR: VERY REV. BIJOY SAKARIAH RAMBAN

St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church was established in 2010 by ten devoted Orthodox families in San Antonio with a vision to build a strong spiritual foundation for future generations. Trusting in God's providence and the intercession of the Theotokos, the community overcame early challenges and celebrated its first Holy Qurbana on June 27, 2010. St. Mary's Chapel opened on December 26, 2010, and the parish was elevated to full church status on December 15, 2011. A pre-existing building was purchased for worship on December 28, 2012. On the Feast of the Assumption in 2015, the foundation stone for a new church was laid. This dream was fulfilled with the consecration of the new church building on December 30, 2023. The church continues to grow in faith, fellowship, and service.

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN

ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

Established in April 1978 by His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios of blessed memory, St. Thomas Orthodox Church of India in Detroit began as a parish under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Philip Jacob, who continues to blessedly serve as Vicar. Over the past 47 years, the parish has grown to encompass over 150 families, maintaining continuity and unity in its spiritual journey. Holy Qurbana and major Feast Days (in Malayalam and English), Evening Prayers on Wednesday & Saturday, and regular Prayer Meetings are hallmarks of Achen's decades of dedicated service and leadership.

In November 1991, the parish consecrated its first church-owned building in Southfield, MI. As the congregation expanded, a former Catholic seminary in Warren, MI, was acquired in 2006. This 38,000-square-foot facility on 5 acres was consecrated in June 2008 by His Beatitude Paulose Mar Milithios Metropolitan (Late Lamented Moran Mar Baselius Marthoma Paulose II). Accommodating over 800 worshippers, our parish is one of the largest churches in the Diocese of South-West America.

Rev. Fr. James Cheriyan served faithfully as Assistant Vicar from 2010 to 2015, before being assigned to a sister parish in Ohio. His ministry left a lasting impact, particularly among the youth and acolytes. In 2023, Rev. Fr. Shawn Poothicote Thomas was appointed Assistant Vicar to support the growing spiritual needs of the parish —ministering effectively in both English and Malayalam.

Today, our vibrant Sunday School serves over 150 school-age students. The collective dedication of our Sunday School parents and leadership resulted in large digital monitors for every classroom, grades preK through 12th grade. The Orthodox faith and Church history are now taught with digital finesse. MGOCSM, Acolytes, and FOCUS are among our most active ministries, contributing significantly to parish life. In 2023, these groups spearheaded and completed a major Icon Project, bringing to life the ancient Orthodox tradition of iconography—a visual reminder of the saints, angels, and faithful departed who worship alongside us.

Our MMVS unit continues to play a vital role in the church's spiritual life, meeting monthly and supporting parish activities. Our Seniors group gathers regularly to foster spiritual growth and fellowship among our retired members, many of whom have been pillars of this parish since their migration from Kerala.

Together, our spiritual organizations nurture faith and community across all age groups, in both English and Malayalam.

Best compliments from the

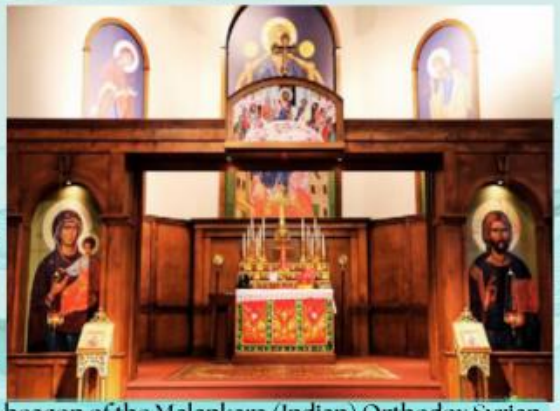
Vicar Rev. Fr. George Daniel (Benny Achen)

and members of

St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Atlanta

St. Mary's Orthodox Church

Atlanta, Georgia



Nestled in Roswell, St. Mary's Orthodox Church stands as a beacon of the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church, rooted in apostolic tradition and vibrant fellowship. Born in June 2011 through the dedication of over forty families, the congregation initially worshipped at St. Michael's Ethiopian Tewahedo Church.

A significant milestone arrived on November 1, 2012, with the acquisition of their permanent home, previously the Church of the Savior. The first Holy Qurbana in the new sanctuary was celebrated on November 4, 2012, marking a sacred new chapter.

The church was solemnly consecrated on November 19, 2014, by His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, in the presence of His Grace Dr. Youhanon Mor Chrisostomos and His Grace Alexios Mor Eusebios dedicated to the Holy Theotokos and named St. Mary's Orthodox Church.

Today, St. Mary's thrives as a sanctuary of worship, healing, and transformation, blending Byzantine and Oriental Orthodox architecture with a rich liturgical life and strong community spirit. Under the guidance of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Mathews III and His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios, and locally shepherded by Rev. Fr. Dr. Mathew Koshy, the parish welcomes all into Orthodox Christian life.

Through ministries like Sunday School, MGOCSM, Martha Mariam Samajam, and outreach initiatives, St. Mary's fosters spiritual growth and service. It is a living testament to faith in action, where tradition and transformation meet, and hearts are lifted in worship. St. Mary's remains a radiant witness, a holy haven where heaven touches earth.

St. George Malankara Orthodox Church

Dallas (Irving), TX

Established in 1989 – Rooted in Faith, Growing in Tradition

In 1989, a small but devoted group of 13 Malankara Orthodox Christian families came together in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to worship, pray, and preserve the rich traditions of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. With the blessing of the former Diocesan Metropolitan, His Grace Thomas Mar Makarios, the parish was officially named St. George Malankara Orthodox Church. Our first place of worship was located at 5528 Forney Road, Dallas, Texas. That same year, Rev. Fr. E. M. Philip became the first Vicar of the parish.

As the congregation grew, so did the vision for a permanent home. In 1998, the parish purchased 2.26 acres of land in Irving, Texas. That same year, the foundation stone for the new church was laid by the late Catholicos, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews II. After years of prayer, dedication, and sacrificial giving, the new church was completed and consecrated in 2006 by the Catholicos, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Didymos I, in the presence of H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas Metropolitan and H.G. Zacharia Mar Nicholovos, former Metropolitan of the American Diocese.

In 2009, the parish purchased an adjoining property, expanding the campus to 3.5 acres. The existing home on the land was renovated and now serves as the parish parsonage. In 2015, an additional 1.25 acres were acquired with the vision of building a parish hall for fellowship and ministry. That vision became reality with the construction of a beautiful Parish Hall, which today hosts a variety of church events, community gatherings, and celebrations.

St. George is known for its warm hospitality, embracing the rich cultural heritage of Kerala while beautifully blending it with the vibrancy of life in America.

Today, St. George Orthodox Church is home to nearly 125 member families who come together in unity to worship our Lord Jesus Christ, continuing the sacred, apostolic, and orthodox traditions handed down by our forefathers. Our story is one of humble beginnings, steadfast faith, and a deep commitment to serving God and His people in the Dallas-Fort Worth community.

Over the years, St. George Church has been shepherded by dedicated clergy:

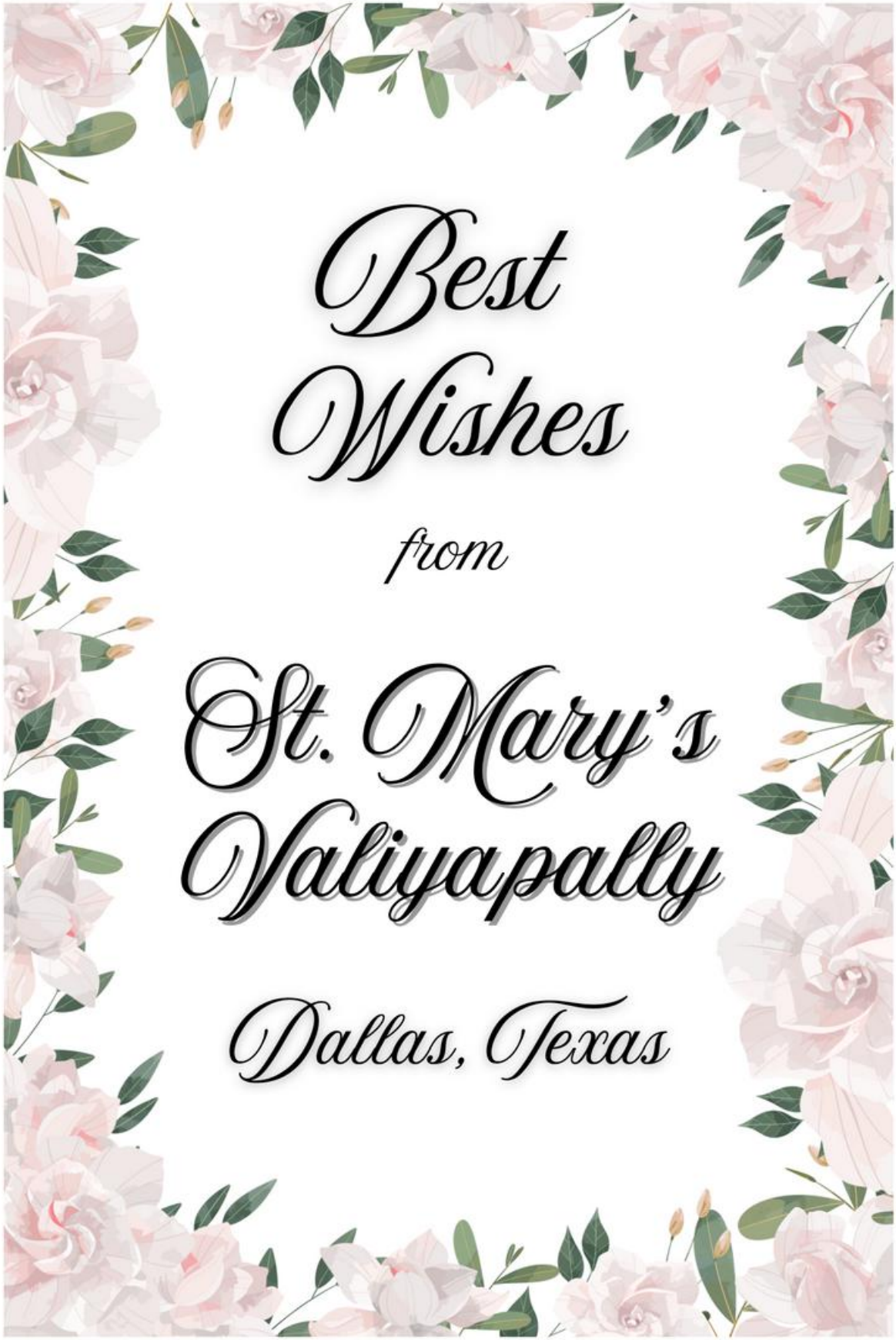
- **Rev. Fr. E. M. Philip**: First Vicar (1989)
- **Rev. Fr. C. G. Thomas**:
  - Sep 1996 to May 2012
- **Rev. Fr. Thampan Varghese**:
  - Jun 2012 to Dec 2018
- **Rev. Fr. John Kunnathusseril**:
  - Jan 2019 to Apr 2022
- **Rev. Fr. Joshua George**:
  - May 2022 to Jul 2025
- **Very Rev. Raju Daniel Cor-Episcopos**:
  - Aug 2025 to present

Photo from December 2024

St. Thomas Orthodox Church is the first Malankara Orthodox Church to be founded in Chicago. In 1971, Very Rev. Dr. Kurian Thottupuram Cor-Episcopa, the founding vicar, began celebrating the liturgy at the Convent Chapel of St. Mary of the Lake Church on Sheridan Avenue. In 1972, the location was changed to St. Peter's Episcopal Church on Belmont Avenue. In 1973, H.G. Mathews Mar Athanasius, Metropolitan of the Outside- Kerala Diocese, granted recognition to the parish as the St. Thomas Orthodox Church of India, Chicago, and the church was registered with the state of Illinois in 1976.

St. Thomas Orthodox Church
CHICAGO

In 1979, L.L. H.H. Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews I blessed the parish during the Apostolic visit. In 1980, Very Rev. Dr. Kurian Thottupuram Cor-Episcopa was transferred and Very Rev. Dr. M.E. Idiculla Cor-Episcopa was appointed as the vicar and the location was shifted to the Presbyterian Church at Rogers Park at 7059 N Greenview Avenue. In 1981, Very Rev. Koshy V. Poovathur Cor-Episcopa became the vicar. Under the leadership of this prayerful and dedicated vicar, in 1990, the building at 3735 N Narragansett was purchased, renovated, and consecrated by L.L. H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios. The church was blessed by the apostolic visit of L.L. H.H. Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews II in 1993. This parish fondly remembers the services of late Very Rev. Koshy Achen who was the vicar for over 24 years. In 2004, Rev. Fr. Slomo Isaac George became the vicar. In 2008, Rev. Fr. Ham Joseph was appointed as the vicar by L.L. H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas. In 2016, by the earnest prayers of many, and under the leadership of Fr. Ham Joseph, we were blessed to purchase the church building at 6099 N. Northcott Ave, Chicago. The church building was renovated and beautifully decorated with icons per the Orthodox tradition. On July 1st & 2nd of 2016, by the Holy Apostolic hands of L.L. H.H. Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, and by the assistance of H.G. Mathews Mar Severios (current Catholicose of the East) and H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebius, the church was consecrated with Holy Mooron. Also in the same year, the long-cherished dream of an Orthodox Cemetery became a reality with the cooperation of sister parishes in Schiller Park, Illinois. Rev. Dn. George Poovathur will be remembered forever by our church for his hard work and dedication in the purchase and renovation of the church, as well as the development of the cemetery. Rev. Fr. George (Shinto) David was appointed as the vicar by H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios, in 2024. Under Achen's leadership and by the immense mercies of God, our church continues to grow. All the spiritual organizations (Sunday School, MGOCSM, MMVS, OGYM, FOCUS, Divyabodhanam and Senior Forum) are functioning well under the framework of our Diocese. Many of our members have served and are currently serving as officials in spiritual organizations at the diocesan level. Our Sunday School organizes a Summer Camp, Koinonia, every year for the Children and Parents of our Church. The camp serves as a Platform for our Children to enrich and establish our faith and know our Church community deeply. Our Youth, MMVS, and Senior Forum, are actively participating in various charitable projects to help the needy. Taking part in Feed My Starving Children food packing, contributing to building houses, helping needy families to afford medical care, helping underprivileged families with educational costs and marriage expenses are some of them. Along with our managing committee, Mr. Liju Mathew serves as the current Trustee, and Mr. Tony Thomas as the current Secretary. All sacramental services and day-to-day operations of our church are being conducted as per the Malankara Orthodox Church constitution. Along with the sister parishes, we hope and pray to continue to serve the Chicago community as a living example of divine faith.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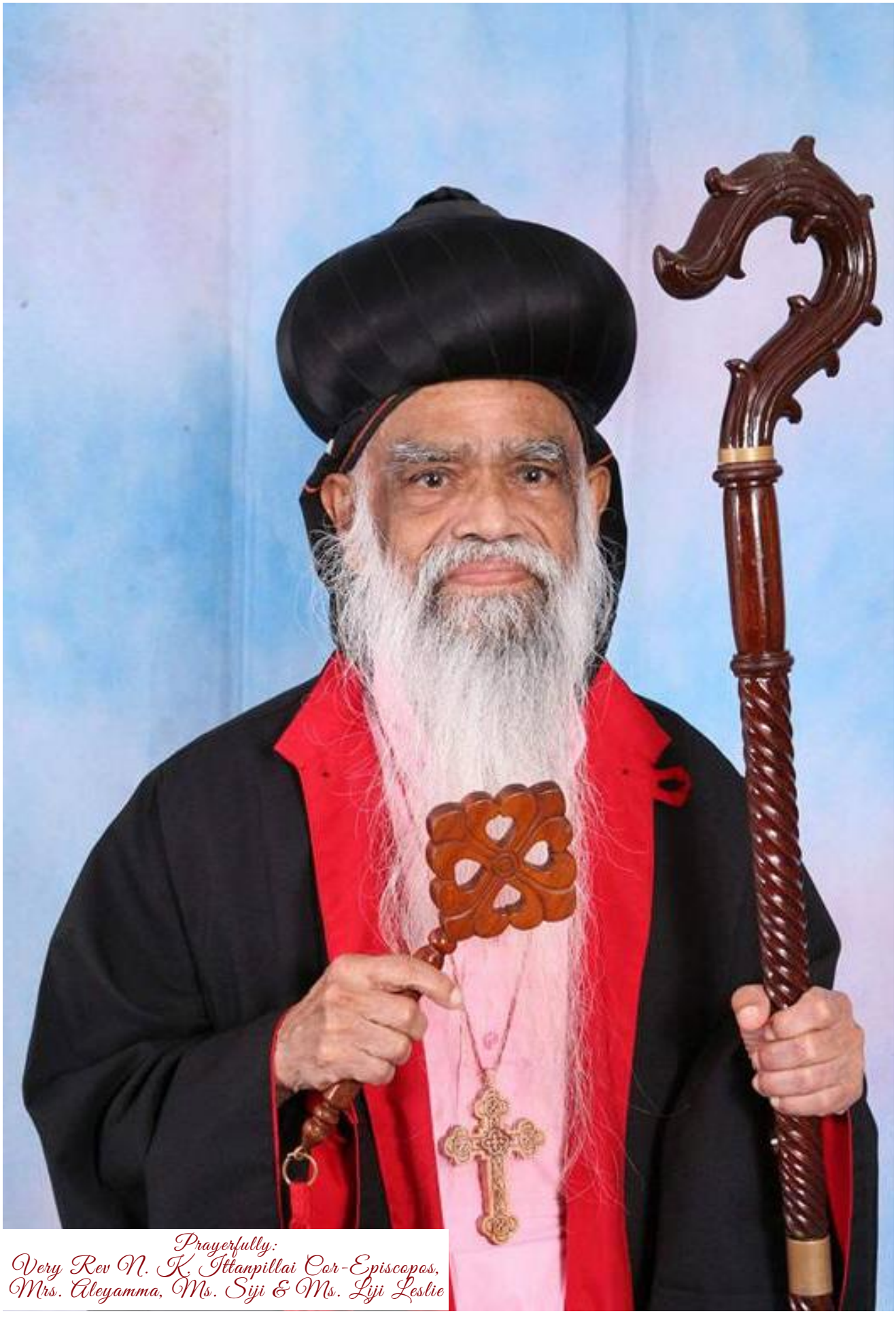

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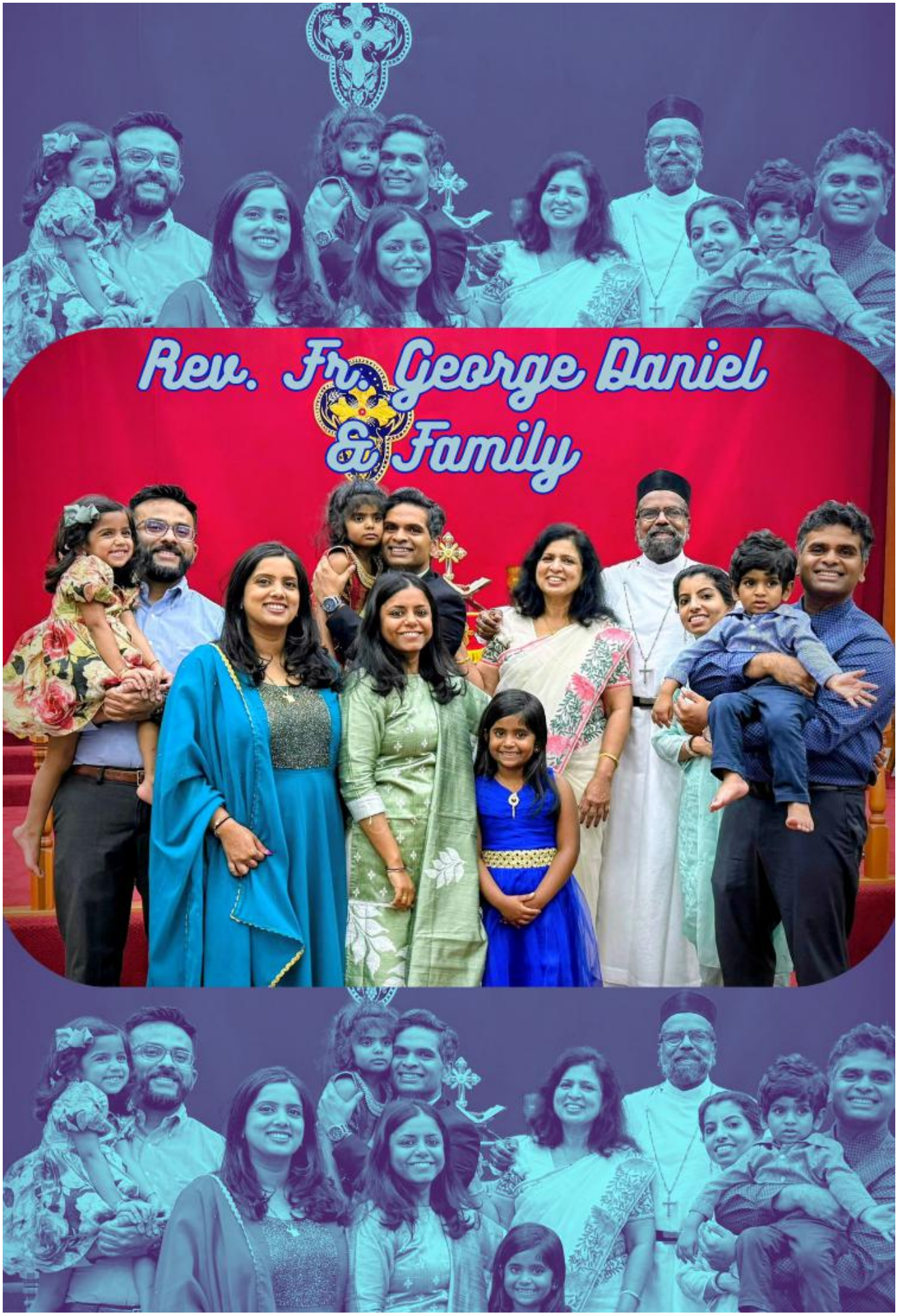
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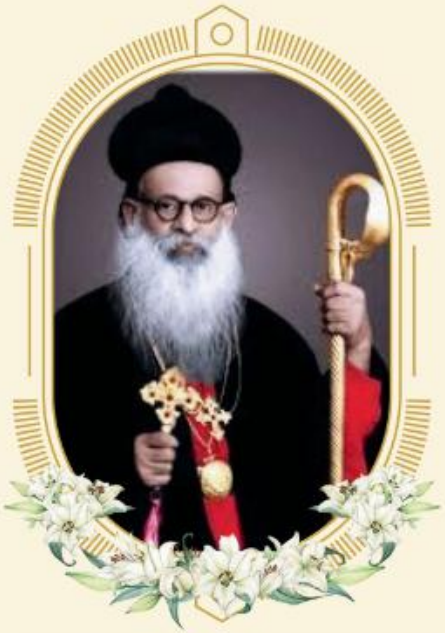

HG MAR THOMA
DIONYSIUS

VERY REV.
KOSHY V. POOVATHUR COREPISCOPA

"HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, THAT YOUR DAYS MAY BE LONG IN THE LAND THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU"
- EXODUS 20:12

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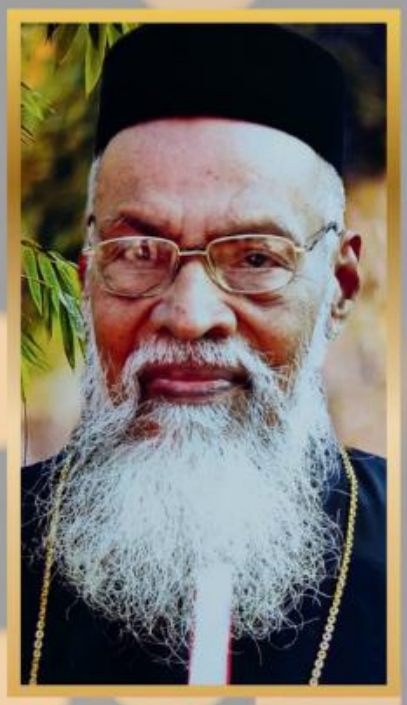

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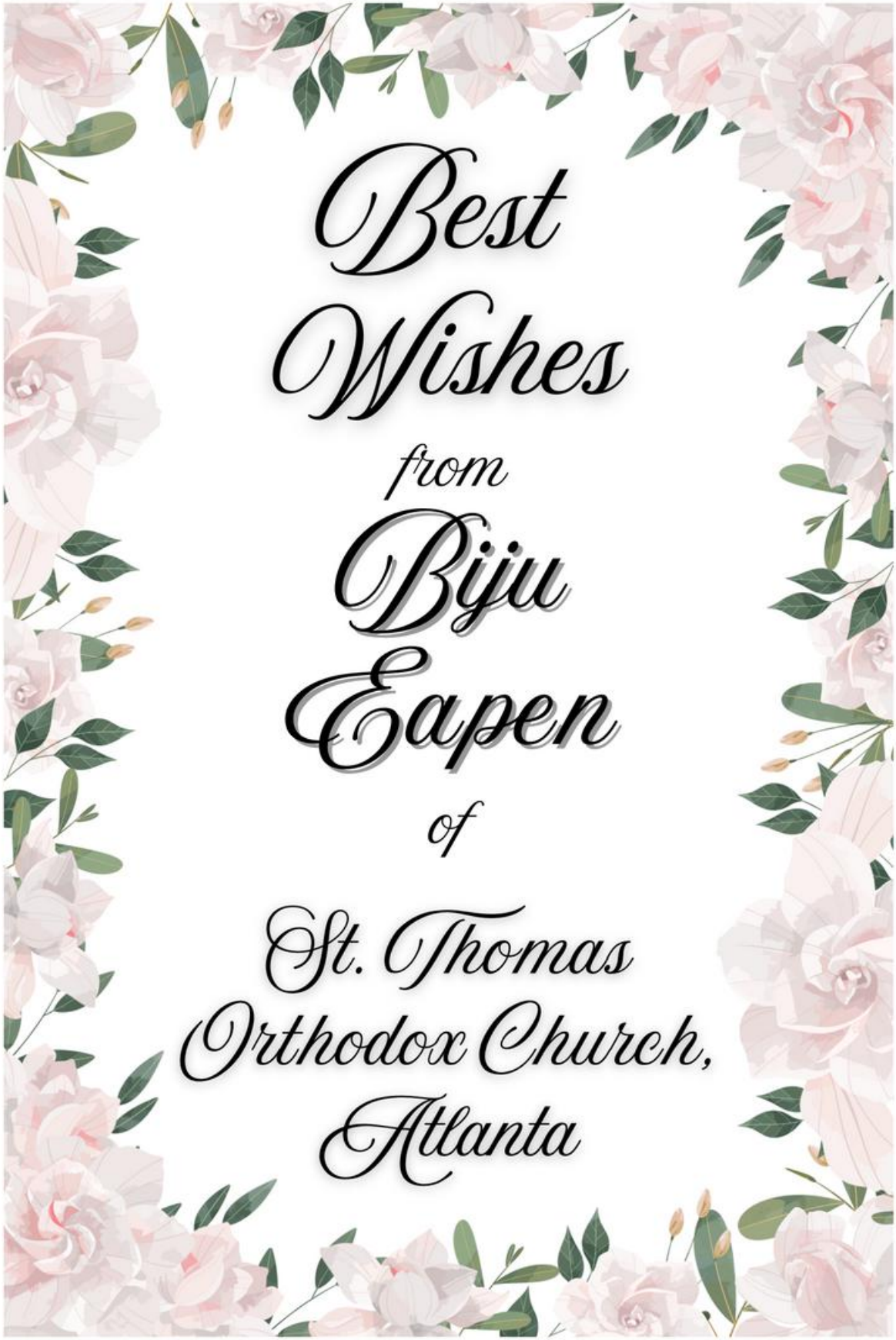
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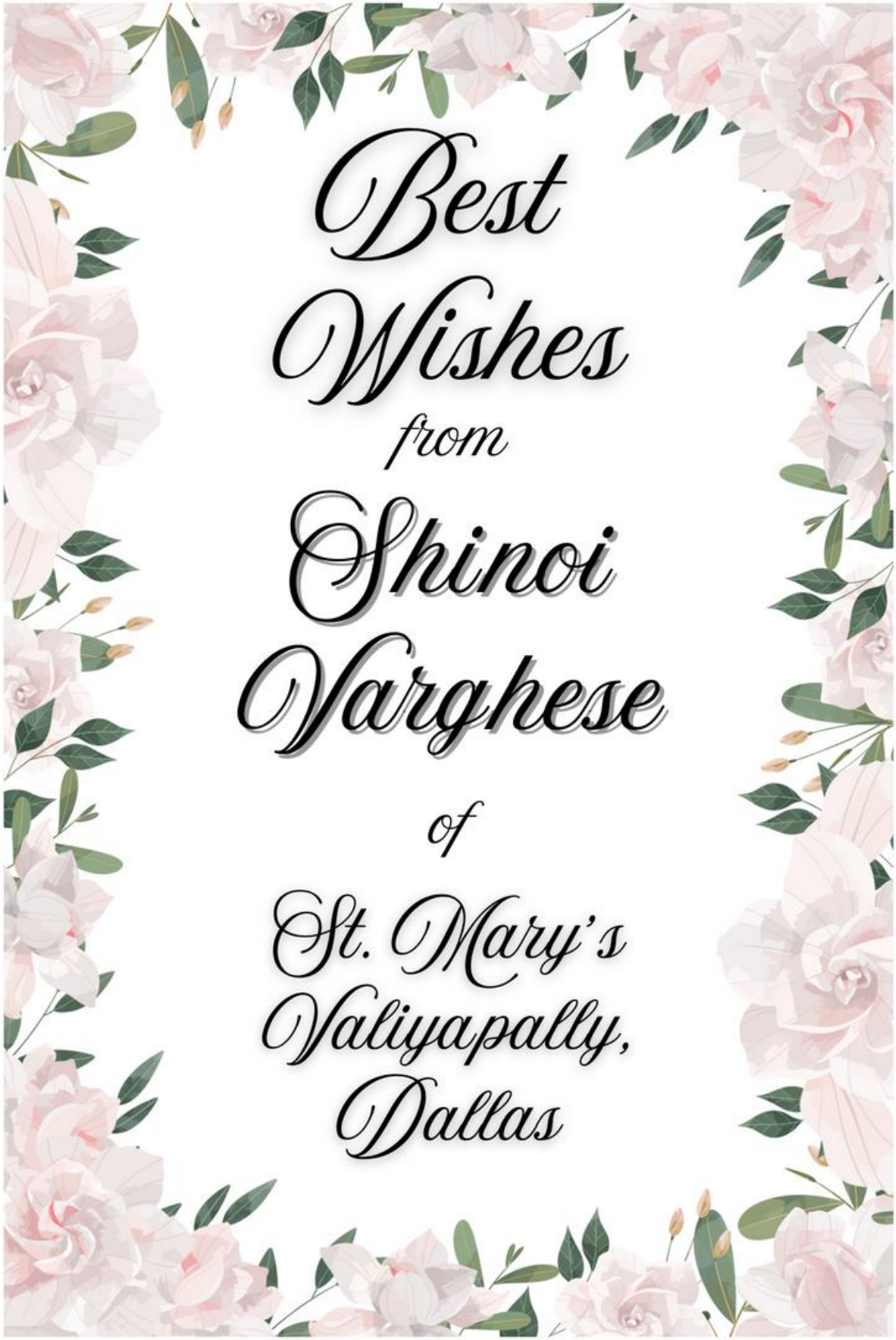
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Varghese
of
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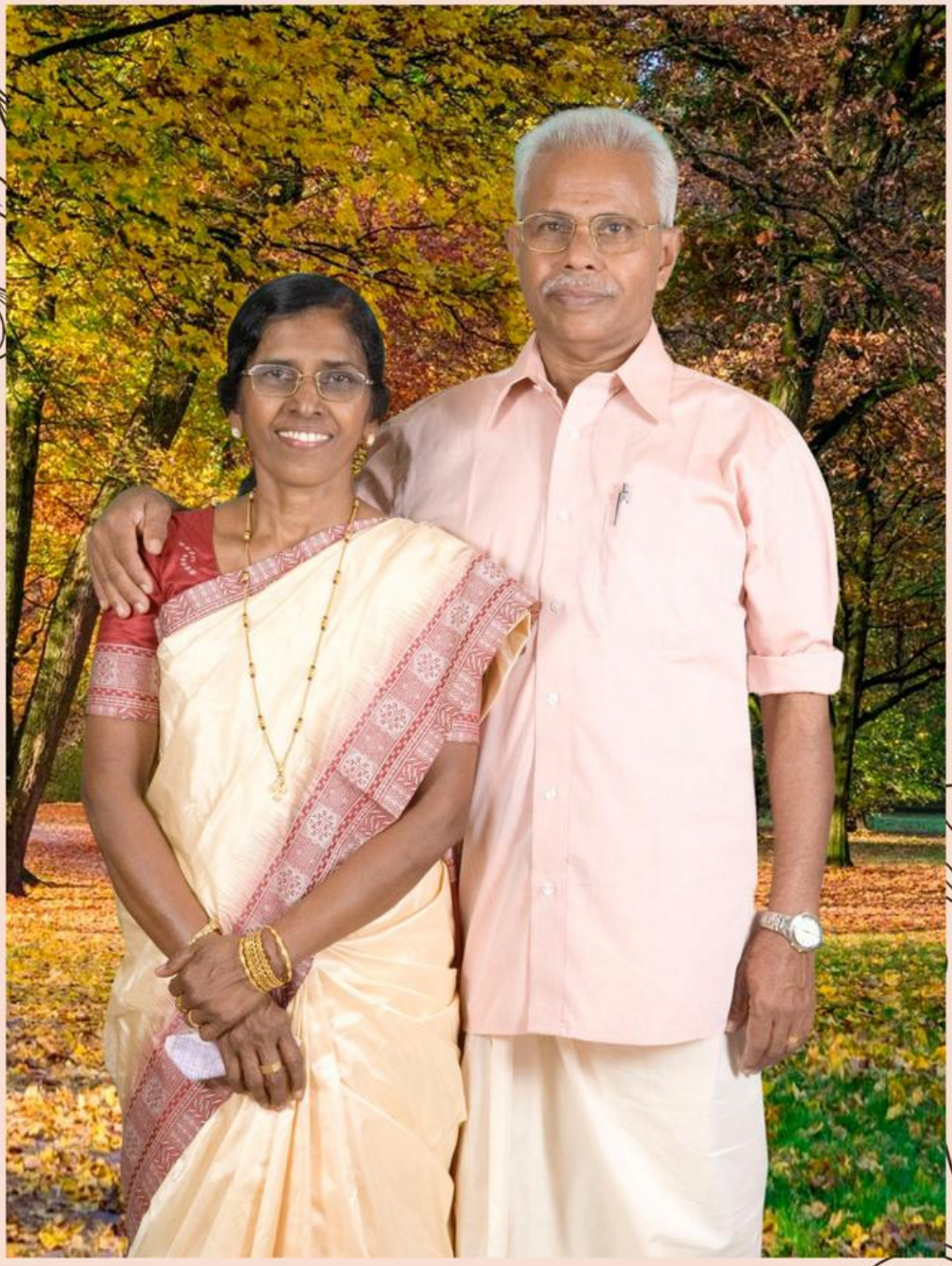
Dallas

In Loving Memory

Valsa Peter
Retired Teacher
Catholicate High School
Pathanamthitta
05/01/1947- 05/16/2025

T. M. Philip
Retired Junior Superintendent
Catholicate High School
Pathanamthitta
03/06/1942 - 07/03/2024



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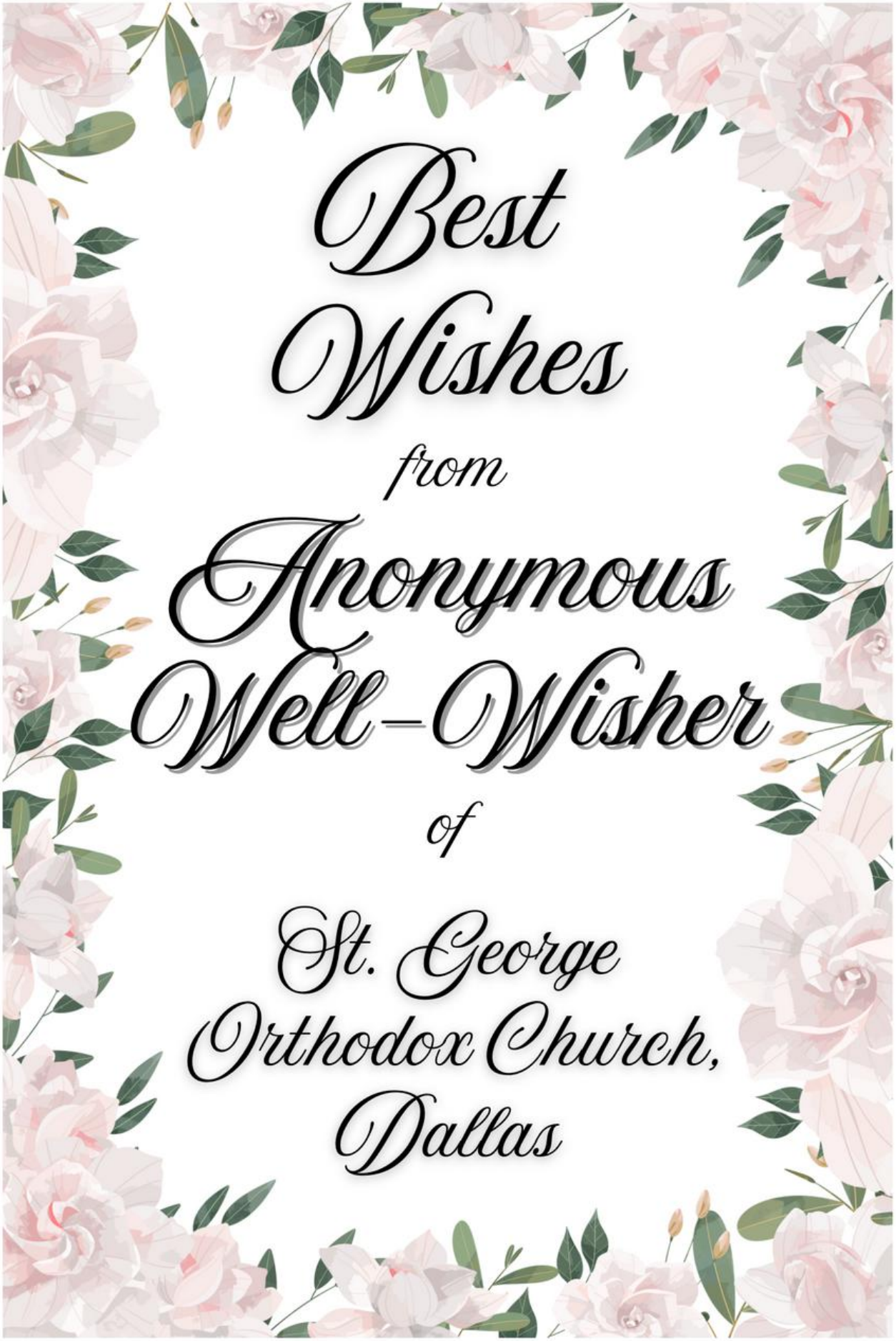
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Well-Wisher
of
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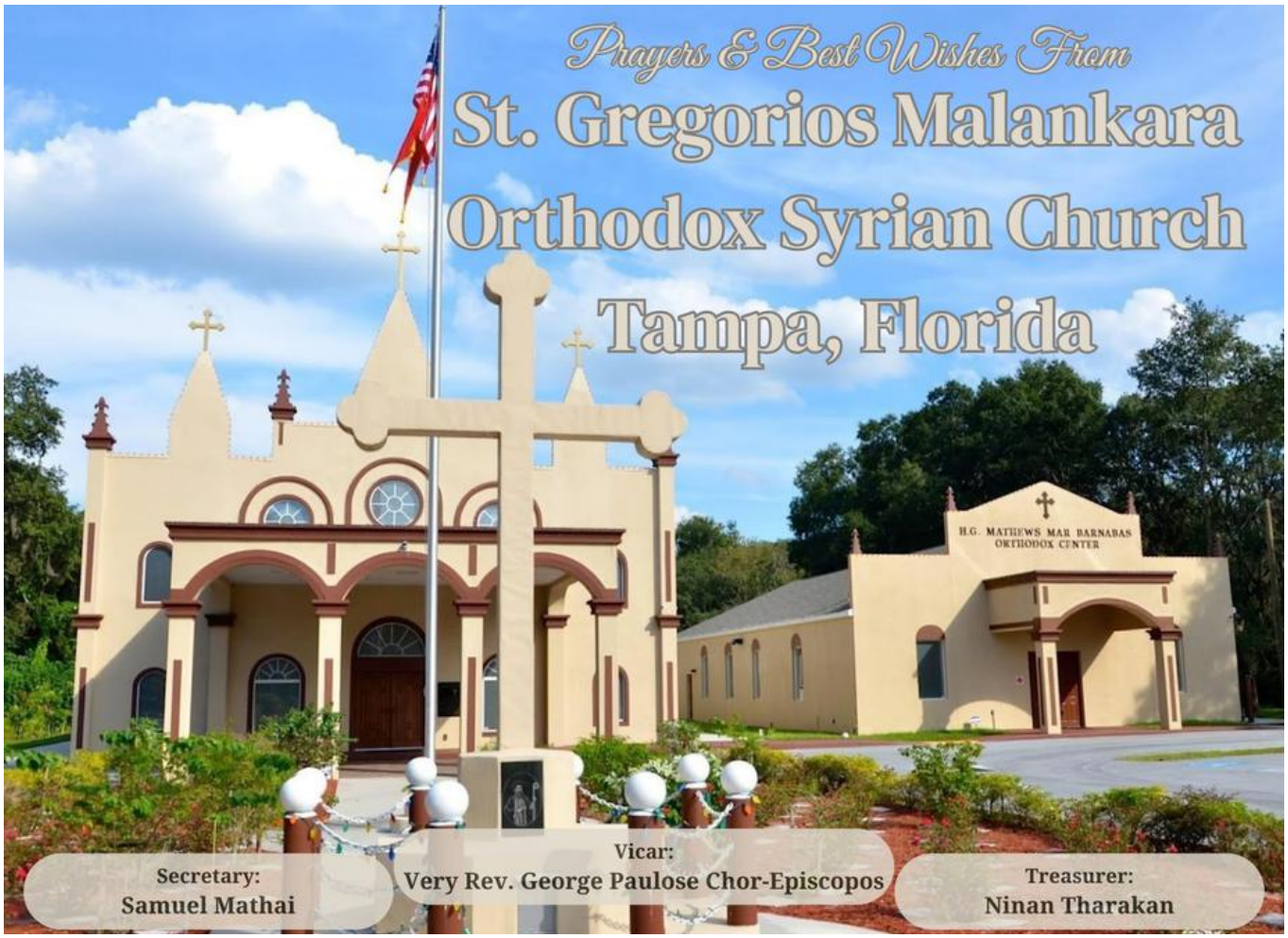

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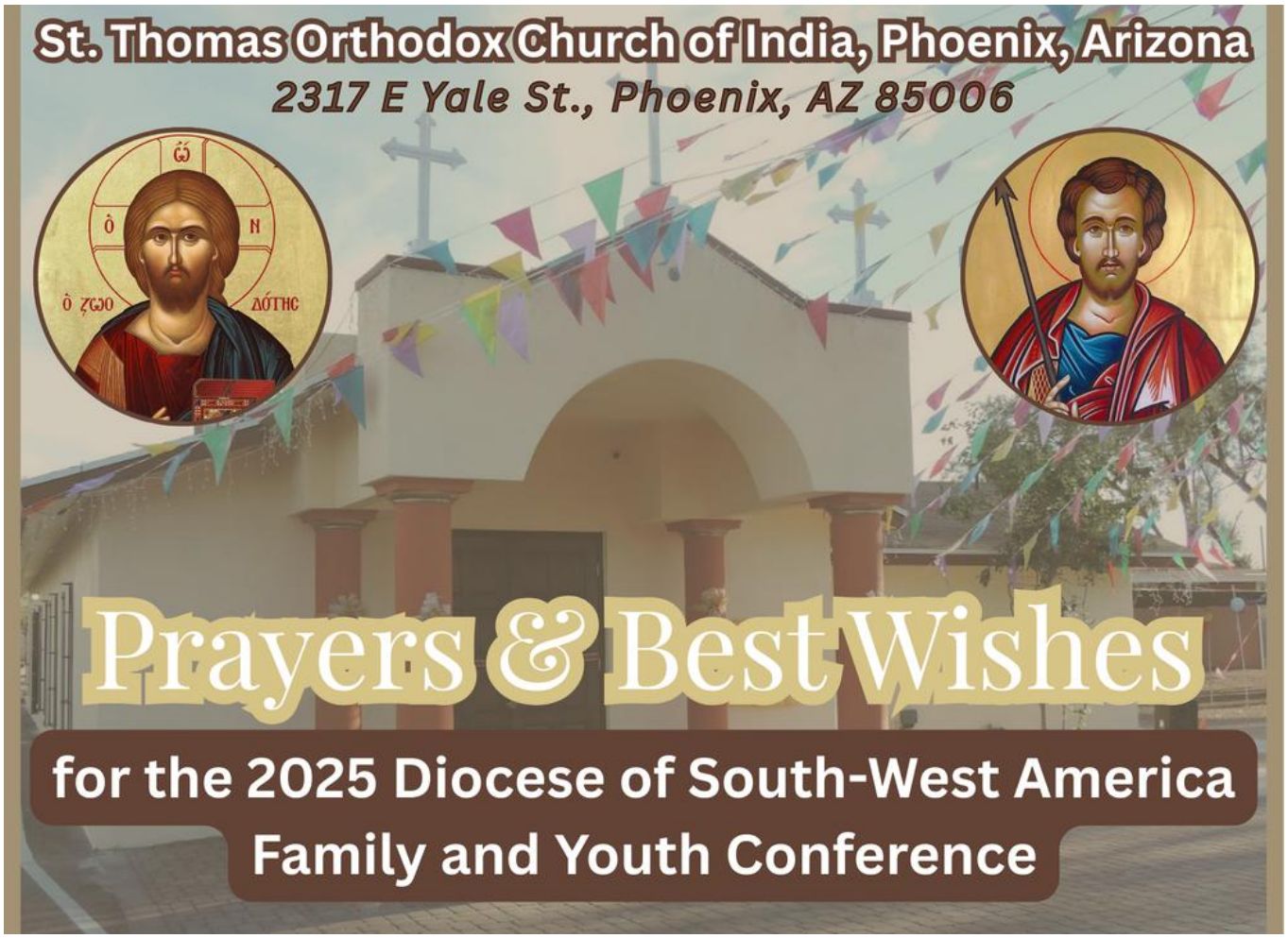
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for the 2025 Diocese of South-West America
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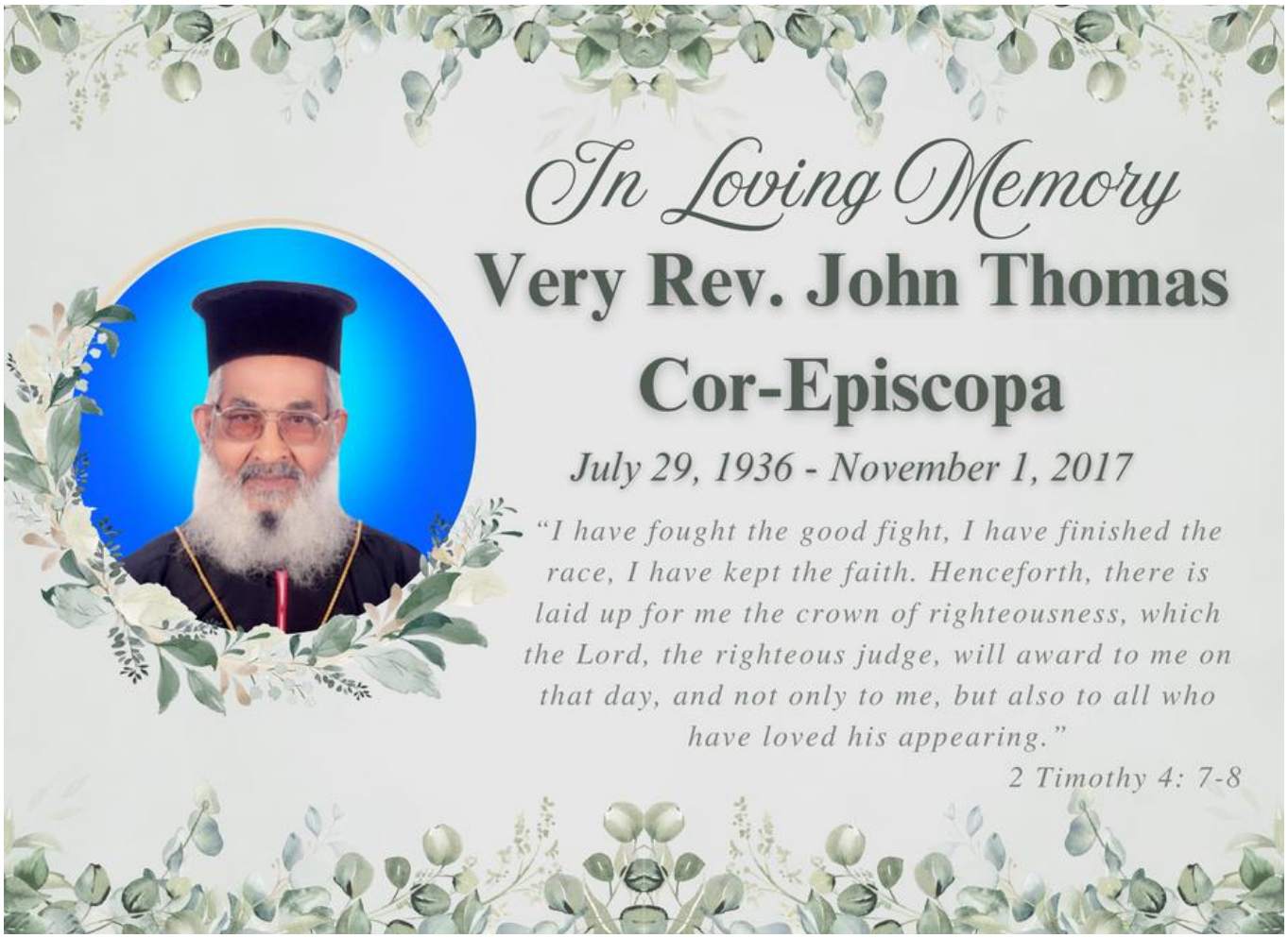
In Loving Memory of
Sgt. Matthew Punnoose
Best Wishes
from the
Punnoose Family


In Loving Memory
Very Rev. John Thomas
Cor-Episcopa
July 29, 1936 - November 1, 2017
"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing."
2 Timothy 4: 7-8

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Prasad John & Family

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Dr. Mathew Varughese,

St. Thomas Church, Detroit

With prayers,

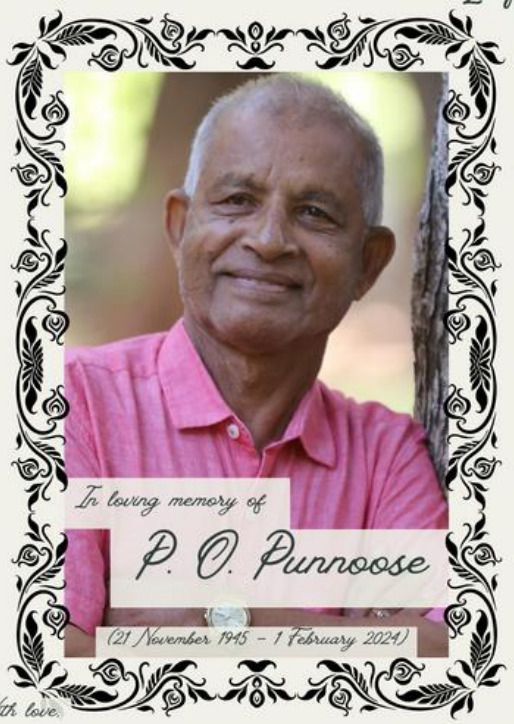
Rev. Fr. P. M.

Cheriyan & Family

St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, Houston

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

2 Timothy 4: 7



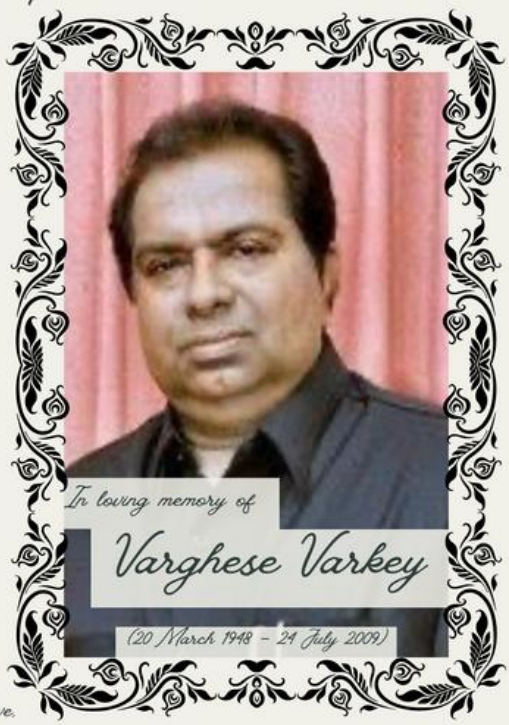
In loving memory of

P. O. Punnoose

(21 November 1945 – 1 February 2024)

With love,

Elizabeth Punnoose, John Varghese, Sheeba John, Vinod Varghese, Sheena Punnoose, Kevin John, Keith John, Nathan Vinod, Naomi Vinod



In loving memory of

Varghese Varkey

(20 March 1948 – 24 July 2009)

With love,

Aleyamma Varkey, Dr. Manoj Varghese, Dr. Raymol John, Vinod Varghese, Sheena Punnoose, Pramod Varghese, Jane Jacob, Shaun Manoj, Shannon Manoj, Nathan Vinod, Naomi Vinod, Miryam Pramod

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In Loving Memory

K. V. Thomas

1950-2021

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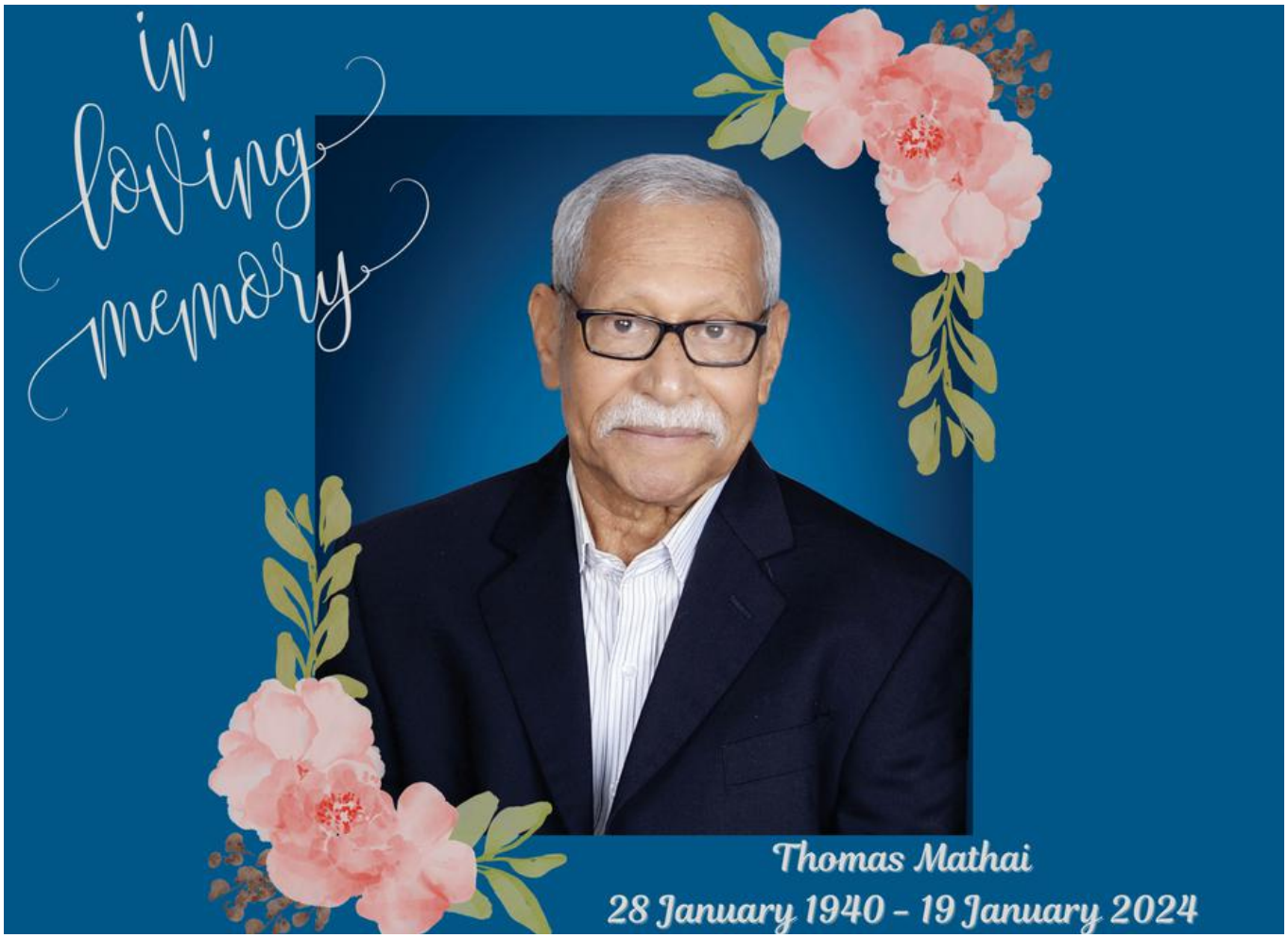
in loving memory
Thomas Mathai
28 January 1940 - 19 January 2024

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH MANI
"FOR AS LONG AS THEIR MEMORY ENDURES
THEY REMAIN ALIVE WITHIN OUR HEARTS"
-MANI ITTYAVIRAH AND FAMILY

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR PARENTS

Mr. Joy Varghese
and
Mrs. Annamma Varghese

He was our rock, steadfast and true,
She calmed the storms with quiet grace.
Their faith, their wisdom, saw us through—
Their love, our ever-guiding place.

Forever in our hearts, until we meet again.

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Dr(s) Tom and Suji Mathew

Children: Nicholas and Arianna

Best Wishes!
Alex Varghese & Family

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Memory Eternal

AMMINI PHILIPOSE

(August 20, 1949 - June 11, 2024)

Inserted by:

Very Rev. K. G. Philipose Cor-Episcopa
Sheeba, Anish, Oliva & Deven
Cecilia, Leejo, Jeremia & Ariana
Venmoney Kulathara & Family
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20–ാം ചരമവാർഷികം

(9–1–2024)

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(ജോണിക്കുട്ടി– ചിക്കാഗോ)

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your warm Heart, your loving and giving
nature are truly missed.
You are everyday in our hearts and
thoughts sadly missed and love.

Sorrowing wife: **Rosamma Samuel**
Children:
Lucy, George & Marina Samuel, Lisa Samuel
Grand Children:
Nathaniel, Isaac, Samuel

In Loving Memory Of

Phillipose & Rachel Thomas

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Inserted by:
Thomas (Babu) and Mariamma (Ammal) Skariah & Family
Chicago, Illinois

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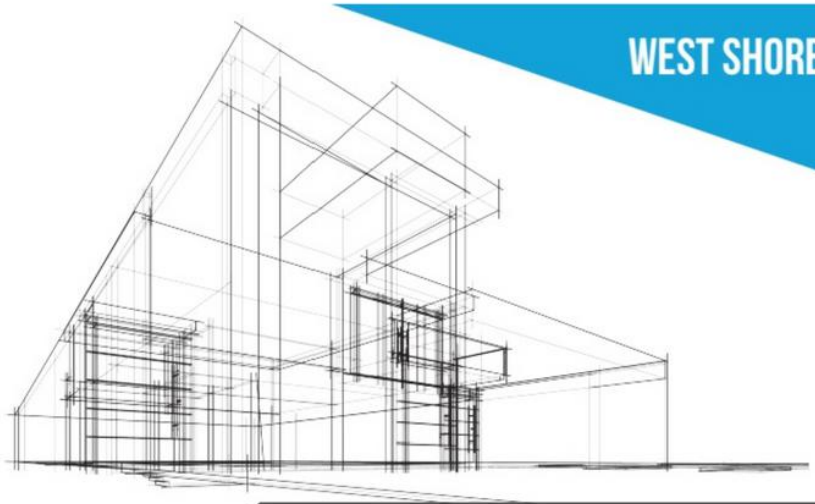

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With prayers,

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& Family

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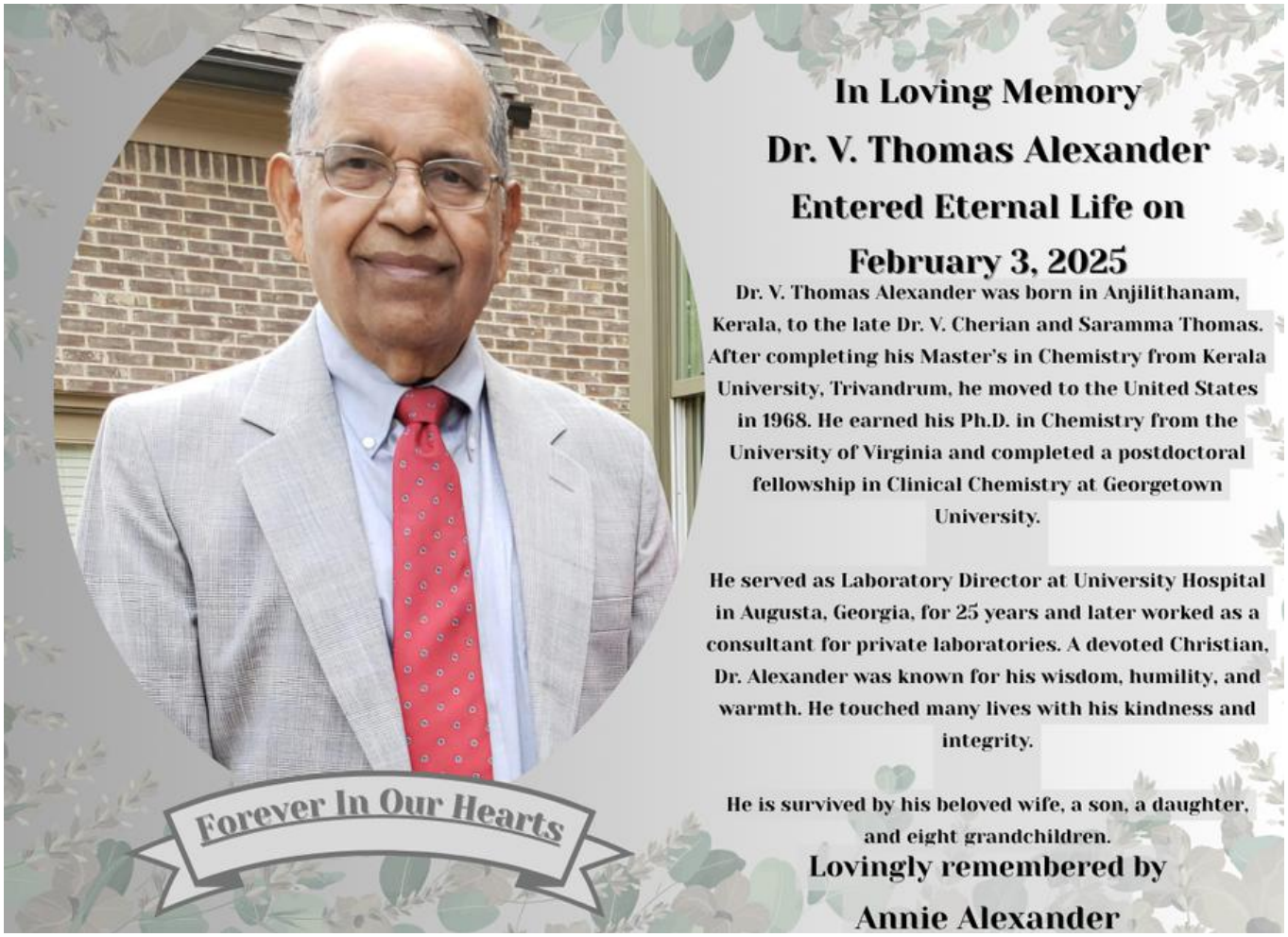
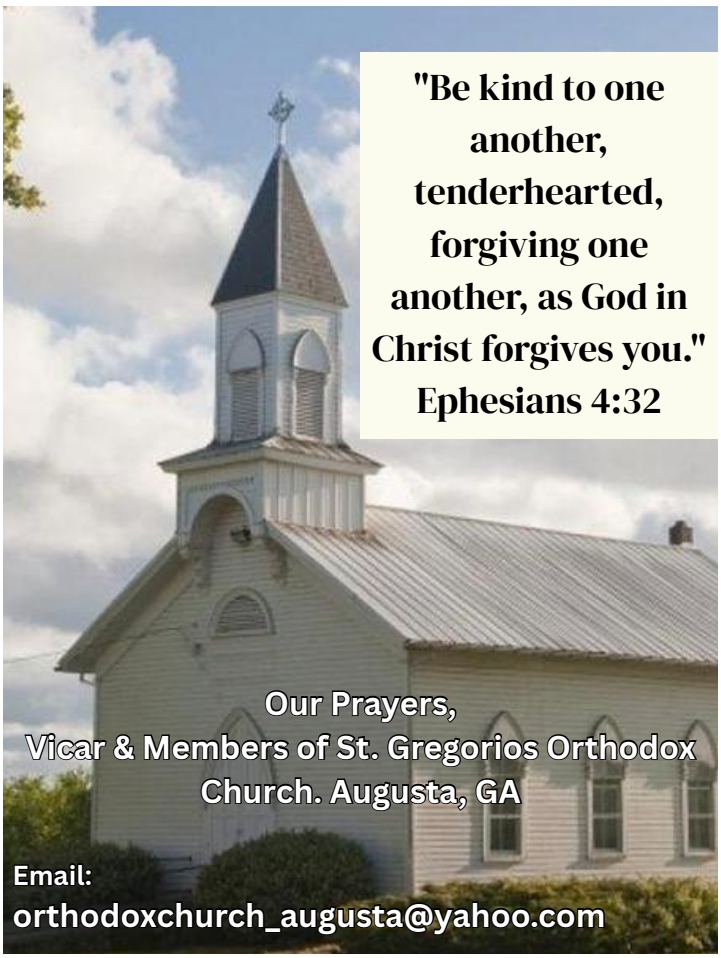
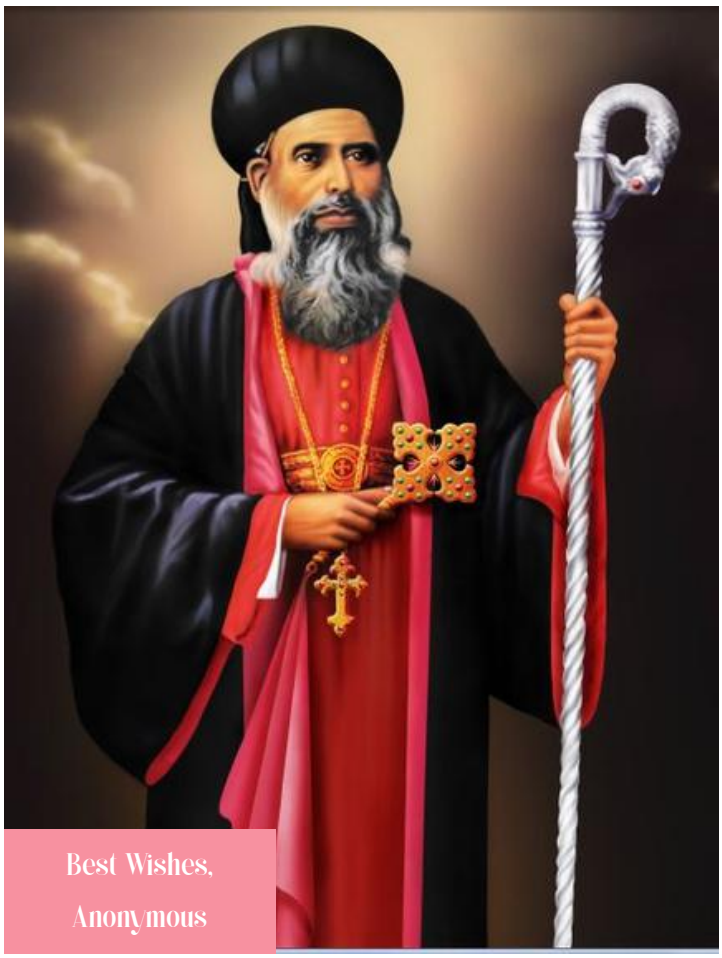
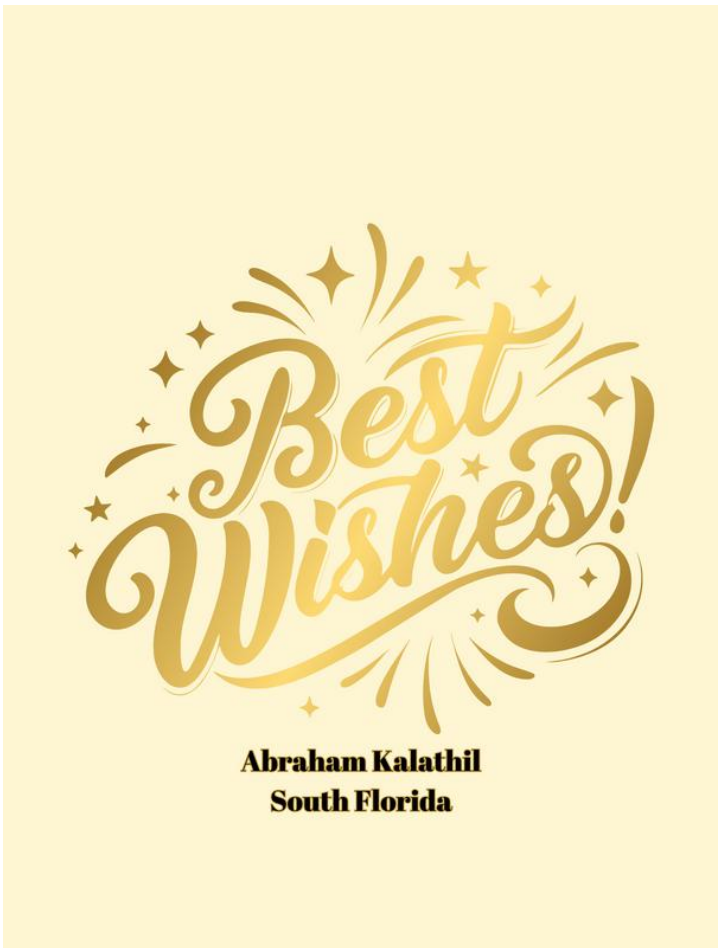

In Loving Memory
Dr. V. Thomas Alexander
Entered Eternal Life on
February 3, 2025
Dr. V. Thomas Alexander was born in Anjilithanam, Kerala, to the late Dr. V. Cherian and Saramma Thomas. After completing his Master's in Chemistry from Kerala University, Trivandrum, he moved to the United States in 1968. He earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Virginia and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Clinical Chemistry at Georgetown University.
He served as Laboratory Director at University Hospital in Augusta, Georgia, for 25 years and later worked as a consultant for private laboratories. A devoted Christian, Dr. Alexander was known for his wisdom, humility, and warmth. He touched many lives with his kindness and integrity.
He is survived by his beloved wife, a son, a daughter, and eight grandchildren.
Lovingly remembered by
Annie Alexander
Forever In Our Hearts

"One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer...A liberal man will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered."

Proverbs 11:24-25


"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgives you." Ephesians 4:32
Our Prayers,
Vicar & Members of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church. Augusta, GA
Email:
orthodoxchurch_augusta@yahoo.com





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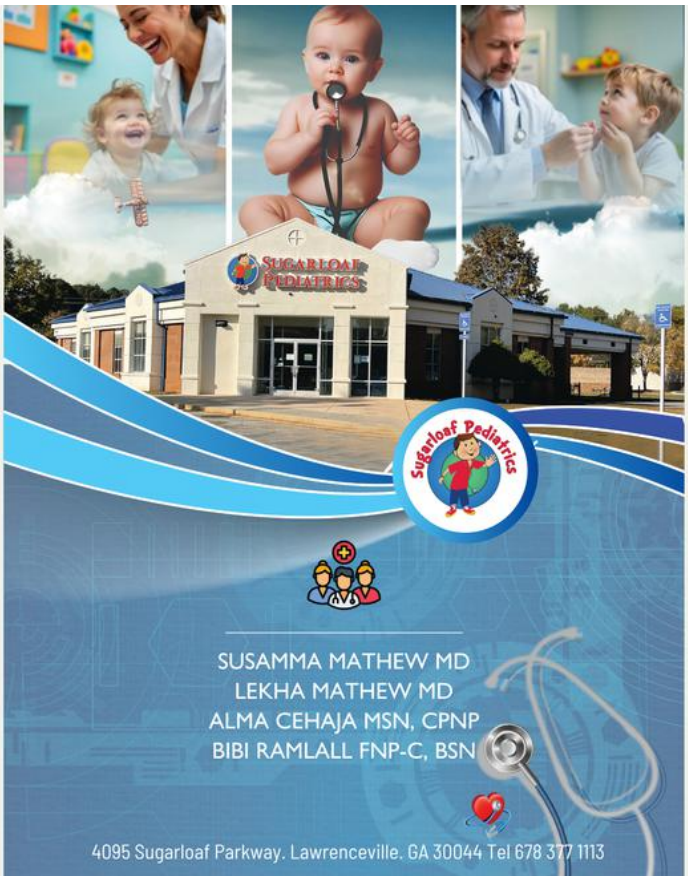
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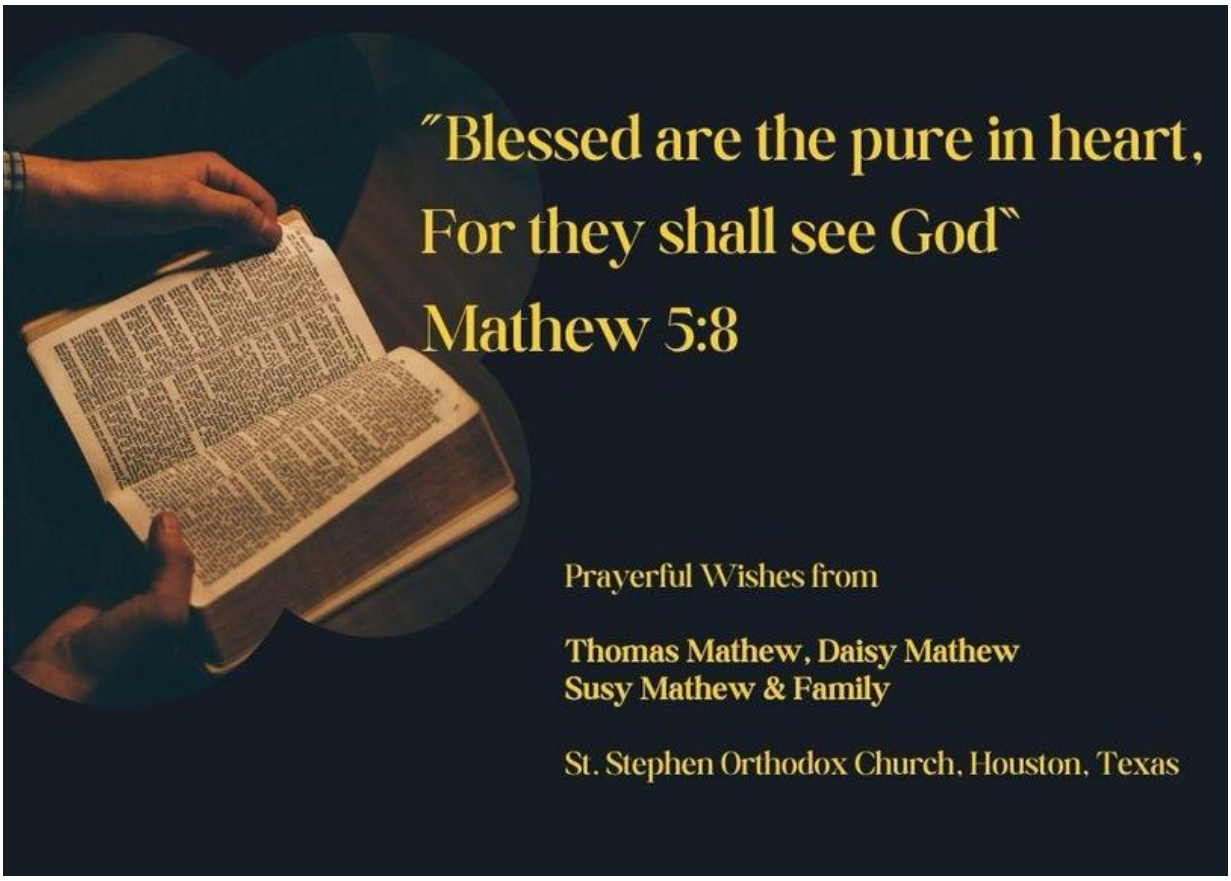
"Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God"
Mathew 5:8
Prayerful Wishes from
Thomas Mathew, Daisy Mathew
Susy Mathew & Family
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"The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

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Hebrews 13:16

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13	KS	St Gregorios Orthodox Church, Kansas City, Missouri	14	Rev. Fr. Jithin Zachariah	$750.00	$750.00
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15	OH	St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Cleveland	20	Rev. Fr. James Cherian	$750.00	$750.00
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20	TX	St. Stephen's Orthodox Church, Houston	80	Rev. Fr. Jake Kurien	$1,000.00	$1,000.00
21	TX	St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Austin	74	Rev. Fr. Sam Mathew	$1,000.00	$300.00
22	TX	St. George Orthodox Church, San Antonio	36	Rev. Fr. Sunoj Oommen	$750.00	$250.00
23	TX	St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Houston	89	Rev. Fr. Johnson Punchakonam	$1,000.00	$1,000.00
24	TX	St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Dallas	65	Rev. Fr. Thampan Varghese	$1,000.00	$500.00
25	TX	St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church, San Antonio, TX	17	Rev. Bijoy Sakhariah (Bijoy) Ramban	$750.00	$750.00
26	WA	St.Thomas Orthodox Church, Seattle	55	Rev. Fr. George Ninan Manampuram	$1,000.00	$1,000.00
				TOTAL	$26,250.00	$24,550.00

# of Families	Contribution Amount
0-10	$500.00
11 TO 49	$750.00
50-99	$1,000.00
100-199	$2,000.00
200+	$3,000.00

"Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Mathew 6:26

A LOOK INTO
FAMILY CONFERENCE

FAMILY CONFERENCE OVER THE YEARS

2012

MIAMI, FLORIDA

Do Not Be Conformed

Romans 12:2

DALLAS, TEXAS

The Home: A Church

Luke 19:9

2015

2019

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Rise Up & Rebuild

Nehemiah 2:18

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Reconciliation & Healing

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

2025

CONFERENCE KICKOFFS

Diocesan Aramana

St. Thomas, Atlanta

St. Thomas, Pompano Beach

St. Mary's, Orlando

St. Gregorios, Tampa

St. George's, Sacramento

St. Mary's, Oak Lawn

St. Gregorios, Jacksonville

St. Thomas Cathedral, Houston

St. Mary's COI, Dallas

SYNO V' HULMONO

July 16th - July 19th, 2025

CONFERENCE RECAP & GALLERY

SYNO V' HULMONO

"ALL THIS IS FROM GOD, WHO THROUGH CHRIST RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF
MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST AMERICA
SYNO V HULMONO
RECONCILIATION
& HEALING
2 CORINTHIANS 5: 18-19
2025 FAMILY & YOUTH CONFERENCE
ATLANTA
AND GAVE US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; THAT IS, IN CHRIST GOD
AGAINST THEM, AND ENTRUSTING TO US THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION.
WAS RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING THEIR TESPASSESS

only safely, but also efficiently to the conference center.

After so many months of hard work, this conference was able to kick off grandly with a beautiful and vibrant procession, complete with traditional chendamelam and muthukudas. Blessed with the presence of the diocesan metropolitan, H. G. Thomas Mar Ivanios, and guest metropolitan of Idukki, H. G. Zachariah Mar Severios, the procession continued in ceremonial style throughout the foyer. It included current diocesan office bearers of the council, including the following: Rev. Fr George (Sanjeev) Mathews, Rev. Fr. Binu Mathews, Rev. Fr. George Ninan Manampuram, Mr. Alex Varghese, Mr. Bijoy Thomas, Mr. Jason Thomas, and Mr. Prasad V. John. Also present were diocesan managing committee members and further conference leadership. Headed by the future of our church, the children, and with the attendance of over 40 clergy, the faithful were grandly led into the opening ceremony.

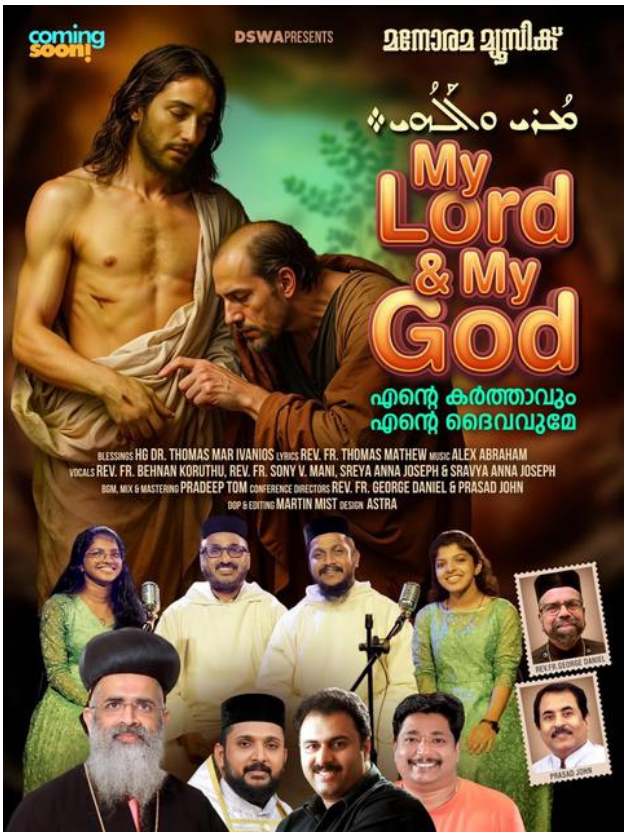
The conference was officially inaugurated with the opening ceremony through the lamp-lighting ceremony. Keynote speakers H. G. Thomas Mar

Events have kicked off beautifully for the Malankara Orthodox Church's Diocese of South-West America as it celebrates its sixteenth anniversary with the Family & Youth Conference 2025. Proudly hosted by "The Big Peach", the conference has successfully completed its first day with several highlights and memorable moments. Spearheaded by the efforts of conference leadership including Director, Rev. Fr. George Daniel, and Convener, Mr. Prasad V John, this event has finally come to fruition. At the Hyatt Regency of Atlanta, the Malankara faithful encountered an eager and hardworking team to welcome and successfully register them to this event. While commute to the city has proven difficult, the transportation committee must be commended for their strenuous efforts to bring the registrants not

DAY 1

SYNO V' HULMONO

Ivanios, H. G. Zachariah Mar Severios, Rev. Fr. Timothy (Tenny) Thomas, Rev. Fr. Mathew (Mat) Alexander, and Mrs. Mariam Ceena Mathew efficiently introduced the theme, highlighting key points of the lessons that lay ahead on the days to come.


coming soon!
DSWA PRESENTS
മനോരമ മ്യൂസിക്
My Lord & My God
എന്റെ കർത്താവും എന്റെ ദൈവവുമേ
BLESSINGS HG DR. THOMAS MAR IVANIOS LYRICS REV. FR. THOMAS MATHEW MUSIC ALEX ABRAHAM
VOCALS REV. FR. BEHNAN KORUTHU, REV. FR. SONY V. MANI, SREYA ANNA JOSEPH & SRAVYA ANNA JOSEPH
BGM, MIX & MASTERING PRADEEP TOM CONFERENCE DIRECTORS REV. FR. GEORGE DANIEL & PRASAD JOHN
DOP & EDITING MARTIN MIST DESIGN ASTRA

Words cannot begin to describe the efforts of the conference choir, led by Rev. Fr. Thomas Mathew, Mr. Alex Abraham, and Mr. Sanju Abraham and supported by various singers from across the diocese. With the official release of the conference theme song, the audience was captivated by the melodious artistry of the choir, which was further supported by the performances from them throughout the night.

With the "Ullasavanji" entertainment program following dinner, the night was far from over. Talented individuals from across the diocese showcased their skills through performances in singing, dance, etc. Today's program of the same suggests a night of the same caliber, filled with even more enjoyable talents to witness.

We thank God Almighty for the grace he has bestowed upon us thus far in our preparation and now active engagement with this conference. We hope and pray that we continue in His blessings as we move forward.

DAY 1

SYNO V' HULMONO

The second day of the Family and Youth Conference 2025 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta was nothing short of eventful. After the previous day's long night of entertainment, the day started bright and early with Lilio prayers at 6:30 A.M. The morning continued with the songs of our melodious conference choir along with a devotional address by Rev. Fr. Isac B. Prakash.

The approximately 500 faithful were then divided into their respective group sessions, which include: Malayalam, English, FOCUS, Youth/MGOCSM, and Sunday School. Keynote speakers H.G. Zachariah Mar Severios, Rev. Fr. Timothy (Tenny) Thomas, Rev. Fr. Mathew (Mat) Alexander, and Mrs. Mariam Ceena Mathew led these groups into a deeper dive on the conference theme: "Reconciliation & Healing." They offered a variety of perspectives on the topic by rotating continuously through these groups for differing sessions. Sunday School volunteers from St. Thomas Atlanta organized activities for the children.

The day, however, was not only limited to speeches. Following noon prayer and lunch, the registrants entered breakout groups that included MMVS, FOCUS, and Youth/MGOCSM. These provided engaging opportunities for the participants to involve themselves in, particularly with the Bible Quiz for MMVS and skits for the Youth/MGOCSM. Key takeaways included reconciling with yourself and having discernment between the right and wrong choices. During this, registrants also had the opportunity to witness the talents of caricature artist Ravi Shankar in person.

DAY 2

The theme-related portion of the day concluded with counseling and a group photograph. The resulting picture is an outstanding red sea of ""Reconciliation & Healing."

SYNO V' HULMONO

—DAY 2—

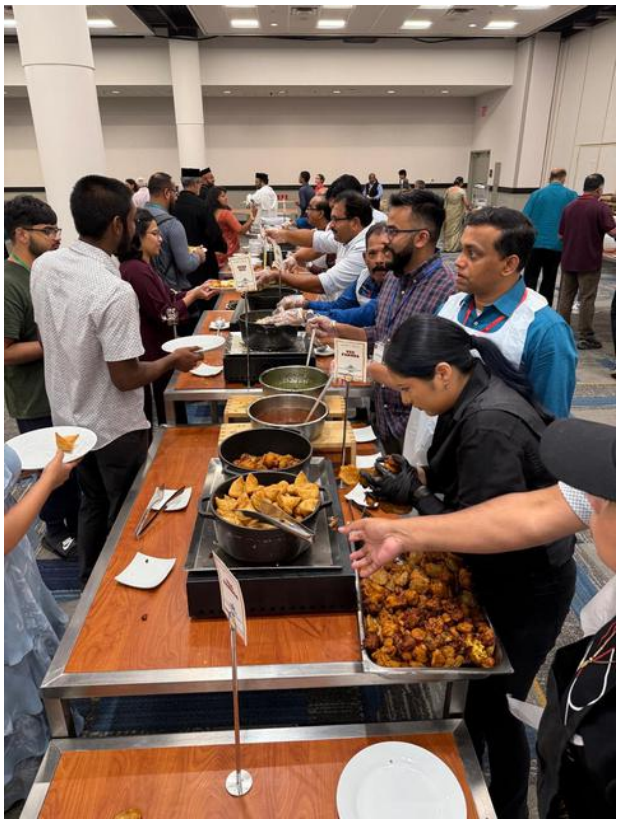
The day then progressed with an additional choir session and devotional address by Rev. Fr. Timothy (Tenny) Thomas. While the entertainment program of the first day had been vibrant and memorable, the second day's continuation of it was just as phenomenal. Highlights of the evening include a hilarious skit, mesmerizing patriotic dance, and priest-led mimicry.

Overall, this conference thus far has been a God-given lesson of fellowship, worship, and, of course, RECONCILIATION & HEALING. As we progress forward, we pray for God's continued blessings along with the intercessions of the saints on our behalf.

SYNO V' HULMONO

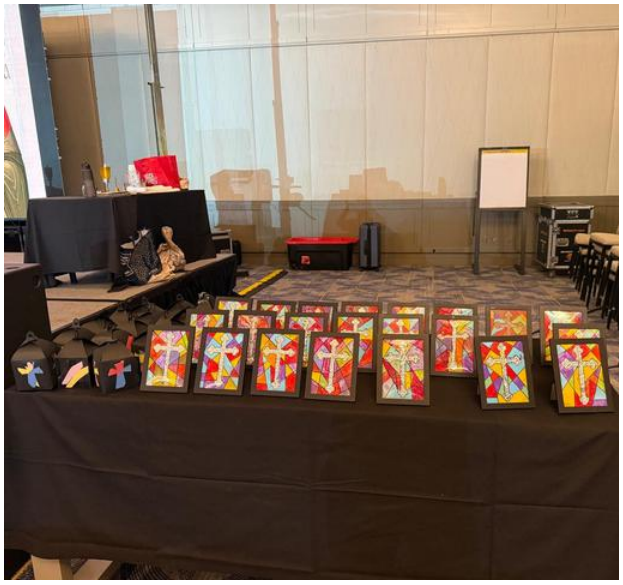
—DAY 3—

Following a similar structure as the second day, the third day of the Diocesan Family and Youth Conference 2025 has come to a successful end. This included Lilio, Morning prayer, choir sessions, breakout groups, fellowships groups, etc. Although alike, the new day brought several new lessons that delved into the importance of friendship, the paralytic man, parable of the lost coin, and much more.



After lunch, business meetings were conducted for spiritual organizations, which included the following: MMVS, MGOCSM, and FOCUS. These meetings were conducted by diocesan appointed heads that were present at the conference with open discussion held for all the members in attendance. This was followed by a general question and answer question, which led to the much anticipated raffle draw.

For several months preceding the conference, the MMVS had taken initiative in leading a diocesan raffle in order to raise funds for FYC 2025, even selling tickets just minutes before the draw. It culminated in the awarding of 20 wonderful prizes to lucky winners across the diocese.



As before, the Sunday School students were kept engaged by volunteers from St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Atlanta. As seen, their arts and crafts sessions involved creation of beautiful lanterns and stained glass windows, which were proudly displayed for all to see in the general session room.

Socialization continued among the lay people as the clergy, baskiamos, and senior forum meetings were conducted in the breakout rooms. Seniors took particular interest in sharing components from their meeting, such as being encouraged to be

SYNO V' HULMONO

Throughout the days, several projects had been progressing in the background. Spiritually, private confessions and counseling sessions were provided. As already mentioned, MMVS had a counter selling FYC raffle tickets. There had also been a counter distributing books written by the late Very Rev. John Thomas Corepiscopa that encouraged donations along with a counter selling earrings brought from India. The proceeds from these collections are to be given to ""Love Indeed" - a charity endeavour of the Diocese of South-West America. Additionally, a counter had been established for selling Byzantine Iconography by Odise Bifsha. Mr. Bifsha and his wife were notably not only souvenir sponsors, but also active registrants for the conference. Lastly, there had also been a counter established for selling a book written by one of the senior members of the diocese.

The day concluded with absolution, evening prayer, and a fellowship meal.

Overall, this conference thus far has been a God-given lesson of fellowship, worship, and, of course, RECONCILIATION & HEALING. As we progress forward, we pray for God's continued blessings along with the intercessions of the saints on our behalf.

DAY 3

SYNO V' HULMONO

On the fourth and final day of the Family and Youth Conference 2025 held at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, over 500 faithful gathered together to participate in the Holy Qurbana. The chief celebrant of the sacrament was H. G. Zachariah Mar Severios, who was assisted by several priests, deacons, and acolytes. The occasion was presided over by Diocesan Metropolitan, H. G. Thomas Mar Ivanios.

Following a quick breakfast and choir session, the closing ceremony occurred. It honored several guests and outstanding participants, whose efforts were instrumental to the success of the conference. With the suggestion of a Diocesan Family and Youth Conference within the next few years, the ceremony was concluded.

The ongoing efforts of the Medical, Choir, Food, Transportation, Welcome, Registration, AV, Photography, Sunday School, and Curriculum teams throughout the conference must be mentioned and applauded. The work of the sponsors, MMVS raffle team, and souvenir committee also supported the event immensely. With the support of the aforementioned metropolitans, cor-episcopas, priests, and deacons, comprising of approximately 50 members of clergy, the spiritual fulfillment was immense and rewarding. Last but not at all least, special appreciation must be given to each and every registrant of this conference, ranging from the smallest child to oldest senior and from parishioners of the diocese to those outside including Canada and Pennsylvania, without whom this event would have been impossible.

DAY 4

The much anticipated diocesan conference, which is notably taking place after a 6-year gap, has now come to an end. Many mark it as a bittersweet moment, recalling it to have been a memorable and enjoyable couple days that they will be downcast

SYNO V' HULMONO

—DAY 4—

to part ways with. However, this experience is not only limited to this period but can transcend into our daily lives. We can all live in the lessons we have learned, foster the relationships we have built, and continue towards working on further opportunities for us to convene in fellowship. In the words of Ivanios Thirumeni, “We are now going out as ambassadors of healing and reconciliation.”

SYNO V HULMONO
RECONCILIATION & HEALING
2 CORINTHIANS 5: 18-19
Diocesan Family & Youth Conference 2025;
16th Anniversary Celebration

DAY 1

210

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTH WEST AMERICA
"SYNO V HULMONO"
FAMILY & YOUTH
ATLANTA

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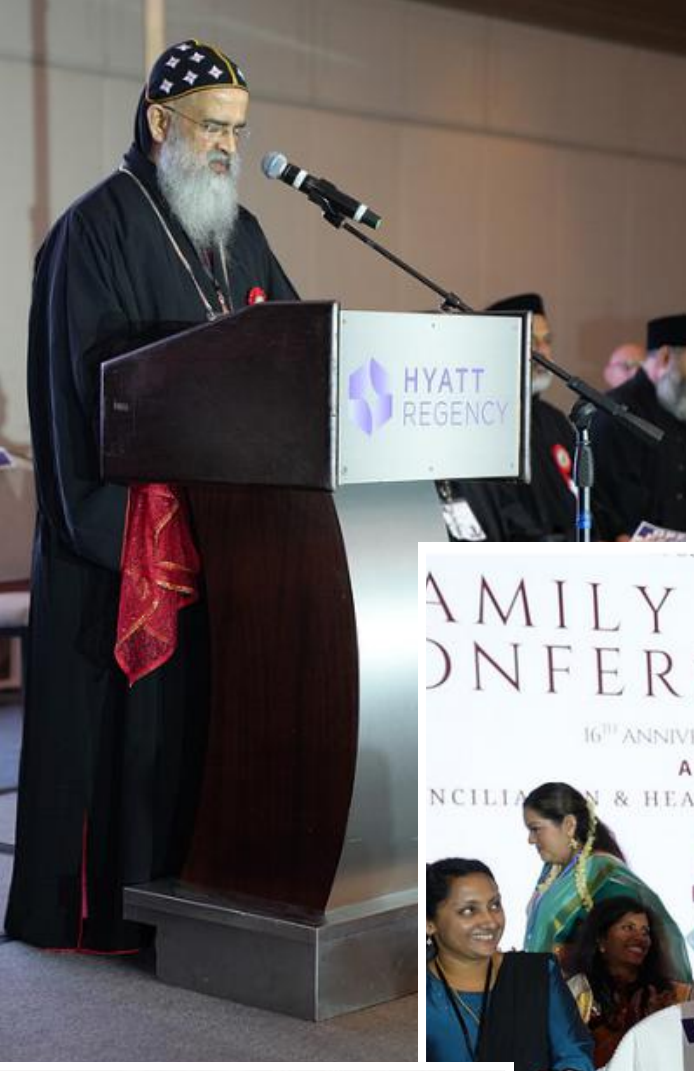
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ATLANTA
"RECONCILIATION & HEALING" - 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19
The Malankara
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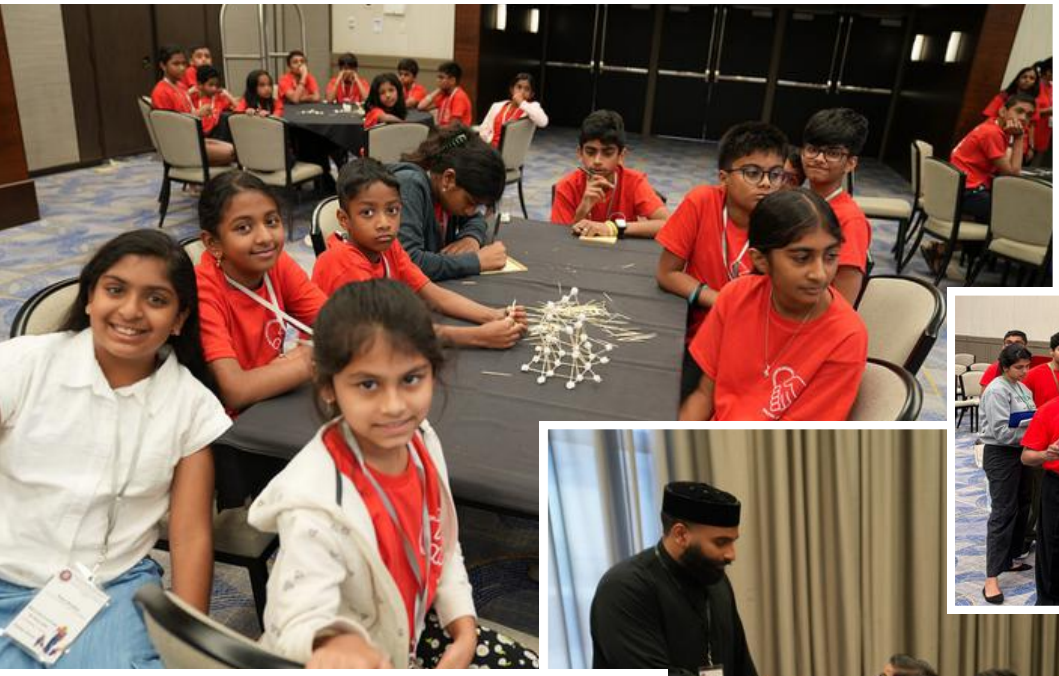
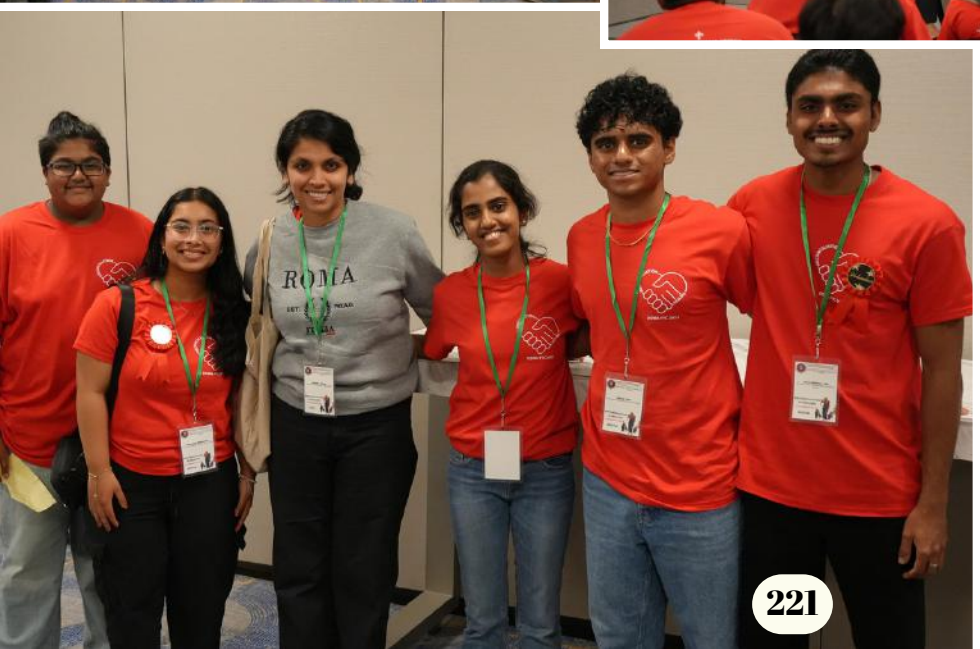
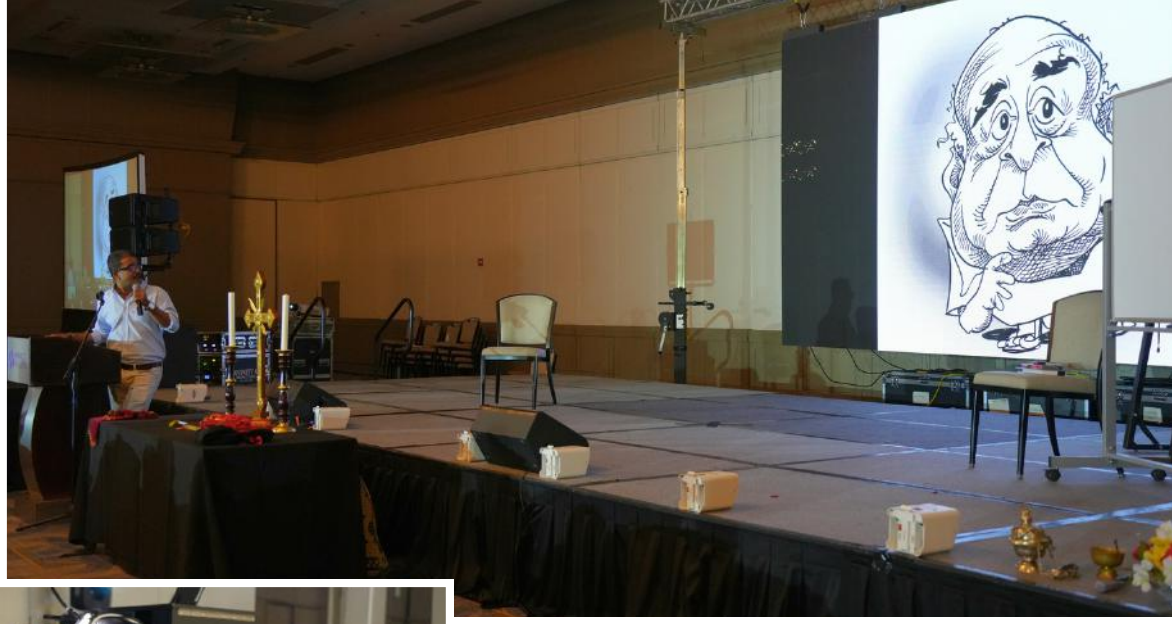
FAMILY & YOUTH
CONFERENCE 2025

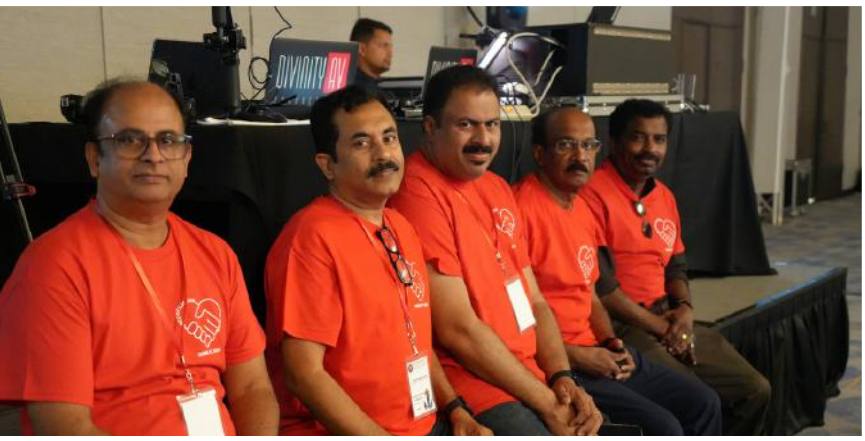
DAY 2



Malankara Orthodox
Syrian Church
Diocese of South West America
MMVS Quiz Competition
1st Place - 2025



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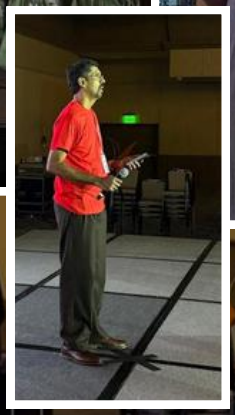

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FAMILY & YOUTH
CONFERENCE 2025
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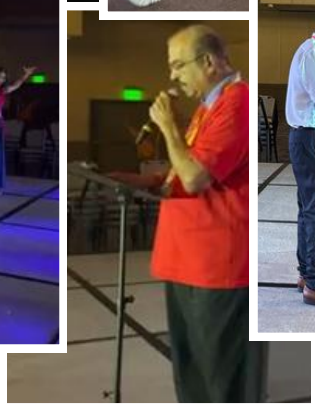

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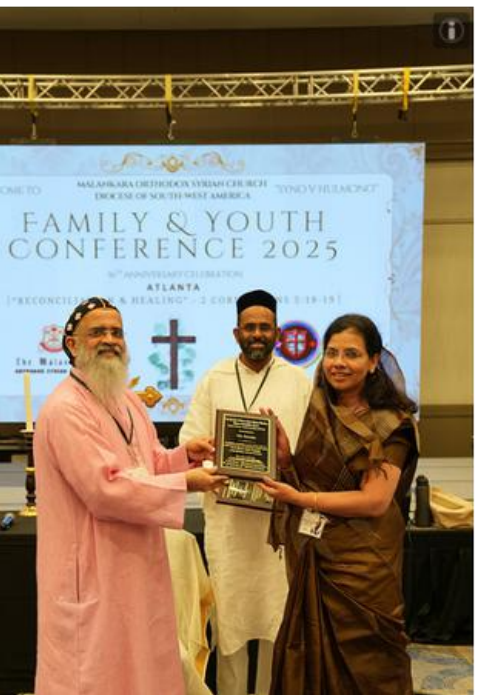
"RECONCILIATION & HEALING" - 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19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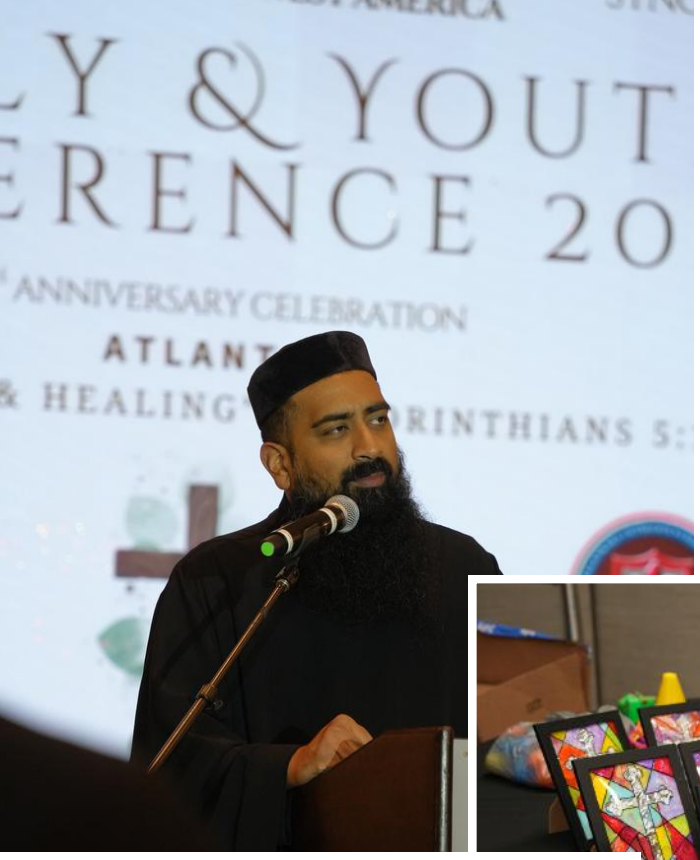
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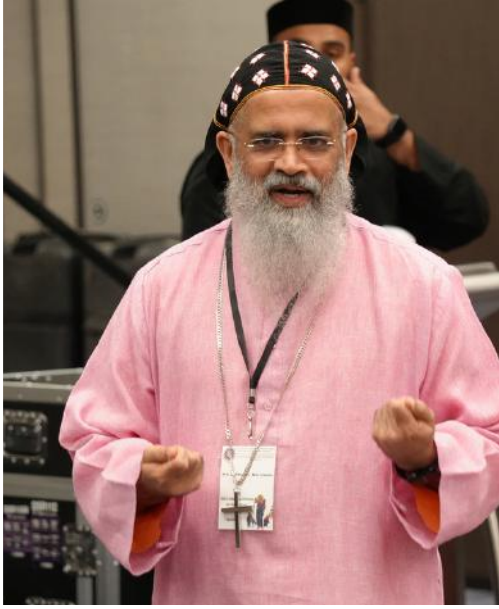

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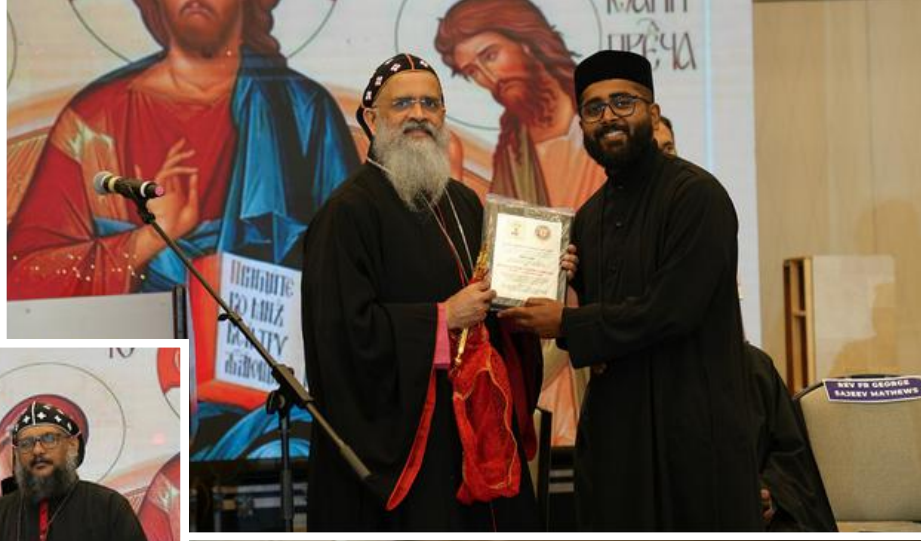

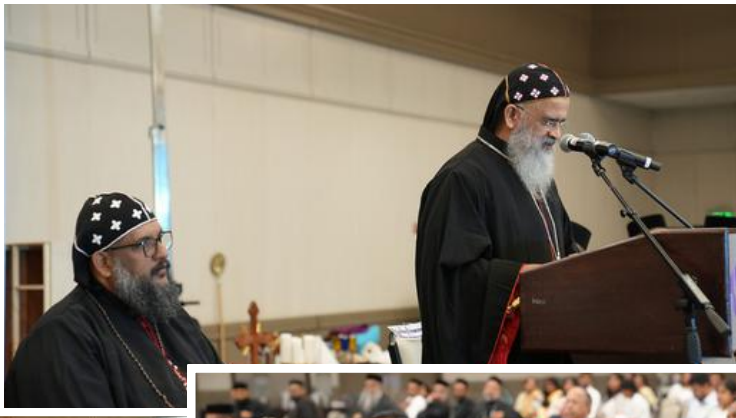

FAMILY & YOUTH
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CONFERENCE 2025

CLERGY

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MGOCSM

FOCUS

MMVS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

SENIOR FORUM

OCYM

ST. THOMAS
ATLANTA

ST. GREGORIOS
TAMPA

ST. MARY'S
ORLANDO

ST. THOMAS
POMPANO BEACH

ST. MARY'S SWFL

ST. GREGORIOS SOUTH FLORIDA

ST. GREGORIOS
JACKSONVILLE

ST. THOMAS
CHARLOTTE

ST. GREGORIOS
ATLANTA

ST. GEORGE
KENTUCKY

CHICAGO AREA

HOUSTON AREA

DALLAS AREA

WEST REGION

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AREA

ST. GREGORIOS
BELLWOOD

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Byju Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta
Mathew Paul, St. Thomas Atlanta
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Prince Varghese, St. Thomas Atlanta
Thomas Mammen, St. Thomas Atlanta
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Jonathan Daniel, St. Thomas Atlanta
Josh Mathews, St. Thomas Atlanta
Roshan Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta
Josif Mathew, St. Thomas Atlanta

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Director: Rev. Fr. Abey Abraham, MMVS Vice President
Director: Rev. Fr. Isac B. Prakash, Former MMVS Vice President
Director: Rev. Dn. John Sankarathil, St. Mary's Detroit
Convener: Sheena Punnoose, MMVS Treasurer
Convener: Lini Sankarathil, Former MMVS Treasurer
Shini Kurian, MMVS Secretary
Sunu Joy, Former MMVS Secretary

06 PHOTOGRAPHY

Georgey Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta
Gregory Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta
Sodharan Varghese, St. Thomas Los Angeles

COMMITTEE

07 MEDIA OUTREACH

Alex Abraham, St. Thomas Atlanta
Divya John, St. Gregorios Tampa

08 WELCOME

Eva Paul, St. Thomas Atlanta
Elina Paul. St. Thomas Atlanta
Helen Iype, St. Thomas Atlanta
Manasa Mathews, St. Thomas Atlanta
Daya John, St. Gregorios Tampa

09 MEDICAL

Dr. Mithun Sam Daniel, St. Thomas Atlanta
Dr. Susamma Mathew, St. Thomas Atlanta
Sajini Thomas, St. Thomas Atlanta
Marina Paul, St. Thomas Atlanta
Sibi Thomas, St. Thomas Atlanta
Juby Kuriakose, St. Thomas Atlanta

10 FOOD

Delsy Daniel, St. Thomas Atlanta
Helene John, St. Gregorios Tampa
Litty Varghese, St. Thomas Atlanta
Prince Varghese, St. Thomas Atlanta
John Varghese, St. Thomas Atlanta
Biju Thomas, St. Thomas Atlanta
Binesh Mathews, St. Thomas Atlanta
Eldhose C. Baby, St. Thomas Atlanta
Jossi John, St. Thomas Atlanta
Mathew Paul, St. Thomas Atlanta
Alex Abraham, St. Thomas Atlanta
Byju Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta
Biju Thomas, St. Thomas Atlanta
Anu Varghese, St. Thomas Atlanta
Elha Thomas, St. Thomas Atlanta
Lyju Iype, St. Thomas Atlanta
Mammachan, St. Thomas Atlanta
Mathew John, St. Thomas Atlanta
Santhosh George, St. Thomas Atlanta
Santosh Varkey, St. Thomas Atlanta
Philip Mathew, St. Gregorios Jacksonville

COMMITTEE

11 AUDIOVISUALS

Georgey Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta
Gregory Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta

12 ALTAR

Lead: Rev. Dn. Toby John, Atlanta Youth Minister
Alex Abraham, St. Thomas Atlanta
Mathew Paul, St. Thomas Atlanta

13 DESIGN

Sharon John, St. Gregorios Houston
Divya John, St. Gregorios Tampa
Elsa Paul, MGOCSM Council Representative of Atlanta
Mathew John, St. Thomas Atlanta

14 PROCESSION

Lead: Rev. Fr. George (Benny) Daniel, St. Thomas Atlanta Vicar
Coordinator: Sybil Chacko, St. Gregorios Elmhurst
Coordinator: Prince Varghese, St. Thomas Atlanta
Coordinator: Mrs. Sheena Ponnoose, MMVS Treasurer
Coordinator: Mrs. Shini Kurian, MMVS Secretary
Marina Paul, St. Thomas Atlanta
Somy Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta

15 ENTERTAINMENT

Jenny Kadavoor, St. Thomas Atlanta
Sumol Sunny, St. Thomas Atlanta

16 CHOIR

Lead: Rev. Fr. Thomas (Joby) Mathew, St. Gregorios Elmhurst Assistant Vicar
Lead: Alex Abraham, St. Thomas Atlanta
Music: Sanju Abraham, St. Thomas Atlanta

17 CURRICULUM

Speaker: H. G. Thomas Mar Ivanios, Diocesan Metropolitan
Speaker: H.G. Zachariah Mar Severios, Idukki Diocese
Speaker: Rev. Fr. Dr. Timothy (Tenny) Thomas, Northeast Diocese
Speaker: Rev. Fr. Mathew (Mat) Alexander, Dallas Youth Minister
Speaker: Ceena Mathew, Northeast Diocese Seminarian
Coordinator: Jefrin Joji, St. Mary's Southwest Florida

COMMITTEE

18 SUNDAY SCHOOL

Lead: Somy Alex, St. Thomas Atlanta
Rev. Dn. Toby John, Atlanta Youth Representative
Rincy John, St. Thomas Atlanta
Shreya Thomas, St. Thomas Atlanta

Diocesan Assembly Meeting 2025

URSHLEM ARAMANA CHAPEL

Diocese of South-West America

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Beasley, TX 77417